

**EXCLUSIVE: THE MAKING
OF A CANADIAN TERRORIST**
FROM SMALL-TOWN BOY TO AL-QAEDA ASSASSIN



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CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWS

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AUGUST 22 2005

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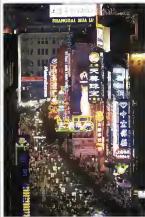
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Alex Himmelfarb, Burlington, Ont.

Muslim introspection

Ishak Muzaj articulates perspectives that many in the Muslim world (and not even everyone there) can't see. Koranic passages are being misapplied and that they couldn't be exploited if they didn't exist ("The 'lost of sheep' part," *Toronto*, Aug. 1). Undoubtedly, the Muslim community needs to engage more actively in the hard job of introspection. However, I encourage Muzaj to be brave enough to speak about the side of this complex faith that the holdouts—the side that lends her the conversion to continue struggling for its emancipation.

Suzanne Lim, Toronto

I would renounce my religion at once if, for a moment, I thought the scripture I've written

could be useful. People like Muzaj are the real trouble, not because they ask questions, but because they think they know the answers.

Syed Hussain, Richmond Hill, Ont.

Shakespeare revisited

I am writing on behalf of Clare Augustin, the author of *Shakespeare: The Hidden Rebel* and *Coded Palace of William Shakespeare* ("Will, the secret rebel," *Books*, Aug. 1). The author, and we, as her publisher, are grateful by the many thoughtful and flattering things Robert Mison Lee said about the book. We do, however, wish to lag one factual correction. After visiting Melis Mison, the distinguished Shakespeare scholar (L.A.), Himmelfarb actually conceded that Mrs. Augustin had persuaded him to change his opinion on *King Lear*. He did not, in fact, concede that the book persuaded him to apply her argument to Shakespeare's entire oeuvre.

Kathy Philp, Publicity Manager, Public Affairs, LLC, New York, NY

With reference to the article about Clare Augustin's book, it needs to be pointed out

that Elizabeth I would have preferred to leave English Roman Catholics free to practice their religion. The problem was not Roman Catholicism per se but its affiliation with Spain, just as Communism during the Cold War were seen as a "fifth column" in the service of the Soviet Union. Catholics in Elizabethan England were regarded as working at the behest of Spain's rules. Philip II. Indeed, there were at least three assassination plots against Elizabeth, and the Spanish Armada did attempt to invade England in 1588. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Elizabeth's government was ruthless in pursuing those regarded as agents of Spain—primarily spies, secular priests and Jesuits.

Leah Abbott, associate professor (history), University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont.

High-end kids and sappy parents

My story about the expensive hobbies of children—and the doting parents who pay for them—really blew me away ("Peterson, daddy," *Children*, Aug. 1). While I want the best for my 13-year-old daughter, she has to earn the privilege of having a hobby, especially one that costs a lot of money. Children today take so much for granted and it's up to us to set a good example by not giving them everything their little hearts desire. If they truly want something, they will earn it. Moreover, I think it's time to get a backhanded reminder of an old song: *You Can't Always Get What You Want*. Sing it to them next time they whine.

Margaret Reed, Toronto

Thanks for this story. You made our daughter's competitive dance, at \$5,000 to \$8,000 a year, seem really cheap. You have opened my eyes to how lucky we are that she has (for the time being anyway) chosen it, and not flying, sailing, or riding show horses.

Georgina Stokes, London, Ont.

Luck vs. divine intervention

In your Aug. 15 issue, Danylo Hlavachuk sees the survival of all 399 people aboard *Air France Flight 358* as "plain lucky" ("Aged and arctic smashes, and everyone lives," *Up Front*, Aug. 15). Without denigrating the work of the cabin crew (Pier Marchadieu sees the survival of all as a "miracle" ("Two-plane miracle," *Marchadieu on the Record*), frankly, I'm with Peter H. Jones: Broughton, Victoria.



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UPFRONT



Oil spill | A train wreck in Alberta delivers a toxic shock

Residents of Wabunan, Alta., and Canada's largest railway are getting along about as well as oil and water these days. And not just any oil, either: The Aug. 11 derailment of a CN train spilled nearly 700,000 litres of the stuff including, in one narrow cut, up to 70,000 containing a carcinogenic substance (naphthalene) used to treat utility poles. The toxic oil seeped down into Wabunan Lake, a resort area west of Edmonton. Premier Ralph Klein admitted Alberta was unprepared for such a disaster, one of the country's biggest oil spills in decades. But the real gash here looks to be CN.

The company at first told tanker fuel and lake oil had gone into the lake and didn't change its story until Alberta Environment announced a suspicious green liquid. (Toxicologists found only trace amounts of naphthalene in drinking water.) CN tried to blame Imperial Oil, claiming the petroleum giant hadn't fully disclosed the nature of the train's contents. "Turn out that wasn't true either. Imperial had identified all the cargo and provided CN with details of the potential risks and safe handling of the substance within a day of the spill. So it's hard to see how it took five days for the truth to emerge. Local residents are angry, as are the province and Ottawa. Investigators are ongoing, but CN may be firing a legalism as sticky as the sludge lining Wabunan's shores.

FOR ANNA-MIRIAM



Cottageb Joe Legato takes a newly dead duck to a cleaning station at Wabunan.

Quote of the week: "Unfortunately the timing of the visits went out of sync and they all arrived at once." British bigamed MALVIN REED, a balding, 59-year-old ex-*oilman*, tells authorities how all three wives showed up while he was recovering from heart surgery.

ScoreCard



CLEANAGE

Europe's real divisions had been as basic as brewers' rights against biotechnology giant to never see exposed barrels to coast up. Insurance redoubts find it, over garden support while Britain's web press starts. Save our Aps campaign. Not world's most uplifting debate.



GRETZKY

Gretz One to go behind the bench at Phoenix Coyotes, perfecting the part-playing career last track owner, hockey man, new coach. You can't take the risk out of some days. Unless, of course, you back them out.



THE MOTHER

Mrs. Earl introduces Ben & Fred service 275, teaching illows parents to pinpoint a self-sustaining Ben's exact location on Internet map. No more "Just going to the library" (to 500, miles) because that other mothering technique, trust.



MEN'S DREAMS

It's official. Scientists discover men not programmed to decipher female voices easily, noise & A&T tones to part all brain used for complex sounds like symphonies. Hope for lockdown couples "not course for listening, dear what you say is music to my ears."

WORLD

RIGHTS Civil rights activists were outraged as Britain rounded up 10 hardcore Islamists and permitted to find shortcuts to deport them as quickly as it could. To get around Britain's laws prohibiting deportation to places that condone torture, the Blair government was negotiating quiet agreements with 10 countries with poor human rights records. The agreements are said to guarantee no persecution will occur.

OIL PRICES Concerns over possible terror attacks in oil-rich Saudi Arabia and a string of refinery shutdowns in the U.S. combined to push crude prices to new records—US\$47 a barrel. As a result, Canadian gasoline prices jumped from the \$1.40 mark in many cities. Montreal and Vancouver were the hardest hit among the major cities.

SOFTWOOD Ottawa is considering trade sanctions against the U.S. in the long-running softwood lumber dispute after a NAFTA appeals panel ended the provisional royalty system that was not an unfair trade subsidy. That was the third such ruling from the body overseeing the North American Free Trade Agreement. But Washington would not concede the victory and was refusing to refund the \$5 billion in duties it has levied against Canadian lumber firms in recent years.

AIR FRANCE Canadian transport investigators ruled that a mechanical failure in the case of Air France Flight 358, the so-called miracle plane that dodged off the runway at Toronto's Pearson International Airport this month, broke apart and burned—with no lives lost. Investigators said the giant Airbus touched down near the midway point on the landing strip in the midst of a storm.

CO-OPERATORS The fate of the five former WorldCom executives whose names at testimony helped send former CEO Bernard Ebbers to jail for 25 years in a staggering US\$11-billion accounting fraud was given five years in prison. Scott Sullivan (above), chief financial officer at the Minnesota-based phone giant, faced the same penalty as his boss, but was rewarded with a lenient sentence for being a "model co-operator." Four other co-operators who testified against the Canadian-born Ebbers received sentences of a year or less.

PASSING AWAY Ever wonder why some people die peacefully in their sleep? Researchers at UCLA say it's because of a cumulative loss of brain cells over time at the command center that controls breathing.



CANADA

DEVILS LAKE The initial filter—a somewhat deep pile of gravel and metal screening—was partially washed away in a gusty rain. But North Dakota engineers stepped up and the rest is determined to go ahead as early as this week with its plan to close flooding at landlocked Devils Lake. Manitoba and Minnesota have complained the \$28-million diversion will send new organisms and pollution as far north as Lake Winnipeg. But talks involving Ottawa and Washington resulted only in the promise of the modest \$50,000 filter, a far cry from the multi-million-dollar model Manitoba was seeking.

AFGHAN MISSION Replacing U.S. soldiers, Canadians began gunrolling the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. About 250 Canadians are there and Maj. Gen. Andrew Leslie said Canada should be prepared to make a 10-year commitment to the war-ravaged country to "break the cycle of warlords and tribals."

WIKED CANADIANS For those with a cause, the Internet is fast becoming Canada's most popular medium, overtaking radio and newspapers and closing in on TV, pollster Ipsos Red reported. Online Canadians spend 12.7 hours a week on the Net on average, and 14.2 in front of the tube.

AFTER THE LOCUSTS

First came the locusts that left you. Then the rains. And, finally getting by it the heat of the sun, the people of six African countries on the fringes of the Sahel—including Niger, drawn by a mix of pulling change winds, and swarms of locusts. The prevalence of Niger showed there is widespread famine, calling that an appalling propaganda, not the UN. And it may be 32,000 of Niger's children are already in danger of not being able to get relief to not stop it up.



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Mansbridge on the Record



THE COMFORT ZONE

Anchor Peter Jennings connected with his TV audience in a very special way

TELEVISION'S network news-anchor club doesn't have a lot of freshmen, so those who are in it get used to hearing some of the same things from the people who watch them. Perhaps the most common is when strangers come up to you and start a conversation with "I feel like you're part of my family because you've been in my home every night for years." Or when they're particularly drifty, there's always the dependable, "I go to bed with you every night." Not everyone we meet is absolutely certain who we are—I've been called Mr. Robertson more than a few times, and Lloyd loves to tell the story about how he and his wife pulled up a rain-soaked pedestrian one evening and went out of their way to drive her home—only to have her say as she left the car, "Thank you so much, Mr. Mansbridge."

The politer than TV news anchors, whether they wish it or not, connect with their audiences on a very personal way, as we have witnessed on these days following the sad passing of Peter Jennings. There has been a considerable amount of coverage on both sides of the border concerning his death, and a good deal of it has prompted heartfelt emotion. And no wonder—the Toronto-born journalist was not only one of the world's best in his profession, he had a dedicated audience that he helped lead through a complicated world. But he was, as he would almost certainly have agreed, just a news anchor. Why then the outpouring of emotion, the tears, the flowers left outside his network's studio?

A few weeks ago, when the CBC lost through reticence one of our most cele-

brate correspondents—David Halton, who ironically was a childhood classmate of Jennings—some of our viewers may have helped provide the answer. On the days following an on-air tribute to David's work that looked back at 40 years of his stories, the response flowed in from those who had admired his reporting. But it was more than that—some wrote of how sad they were about David's leaving because, in so many ways, his telling of the great issues of our time had helped, in a way, frame their lives. And so I'm sure it was with Peter Jennings.

For almost two generations of viewers, he'd been there with his incredibly smooth and intelligent style, as a foreign correspondent in the turbulent Middle East, and as an anchor steering the coverage of assassination attempts, space missions, elections, wars in the Gulf, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq, not to mention the marathon broadcast that was Sept. 11. For many, those stories will forever be linked to the way he told them. To add only not have him there is a loss this generation just of him, but of those who had so depended upon him to not only explain, but to comfort.

I know Peter—not closely, but enough that we would spend a few moments chatting when our paths crossed. But mostly, I, like his millions of other viewers, based my relationship on what I saw on the screen. Often when the big scores would hit, I'd be sitting in my anchor chair trying to make sense of it all for our viewers, and I'd catch a glimpse of the emotions in the studio that would be tracking the coverage of our colleagues. While the webcam was switched off, there was always one channel where I could tell "them" the comforting tones of the anchor embracing his audience in his very particular style. And I still do. □

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television news and anchor of The National. To connect: letters@national.ca

Passages

CONVICTED He came to prominence in 1962, the happy immigrant whose wife Lana bore quans at a Montreal hospital. Today, Lebanon-born Majid Assiour Abi Khalil, 48, has a different burden. Caught in a sting by RCMP and the FBI, he pleaded guilty in an Arkansas court to trying to sell banned military equipment to Lebanon's militant Hezbollah. Khalil faces 30 years in prison.

DIED Toronto-born and Ottawa-raised, broadcaster Peter Jennings made his mark in the U.S. as an intensely serious correspondent and the urbane long-time anchor for ABC News. An unflappable gem, Jennings was also an essential pipeline through which a generation of Canadian journalists made in way too a bigger stage. A smoker, Jennings died of lung cancer at his New York home. He was 67.

REINSTATED His was the under punch that broke the spirit of pro hockey and the neck of former Colorado player Steve Moore, 26, in a grudge match in March 2004. But Vancouver Canucks star Todd Bertuzzi, 26, will return to the NHL this season following his 17-month ban, which encompassed 20 games and a season-long lockout.

ARRESTED Best not to kiss and tell. Montreal beauty Natalia McLennan, 23, proclaimed New York City's top escort in July's New York magazine, was charged with prostitution and money laundering. She appeared in many publications, including Maclean's, and on TV claiming to have made US\$1.5 million charging \$1,000 a night.

DIAGNOSED She was the devoted wife of Superman actor Christopher Reeve who died in October at 52, one year after being paralyzed in a riding accident. New York-based singer Dana Reeve, 44 and a non-smoker, was diagnosed with lung cancer.



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THE MACLEAN'S INTERVIEW



Interview | JOHN STROUD

'WE HAD THE MOST DEATHS OF ANY POW CAMP IN JAPAN'

THEY'VE BEEN called Canada's forgotten vets. In December 1941, nearly 2,000 members of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Quebec arrived in Hong Kong to help defend the British colony against a massive Japanese army. Part of a garrison that was 14,000 strong, they had no air support and in less than three weeks of furious fighting were overrun by a Japanese force of nearly 30,000. For nearly four years, from Dec. 23, 1941, until V-J Day, Aug. 15, 1945, these captured Canadians were prisoners of war. Among the approximately 160 still alive is 84-year-old John Stroud of Toronto, president of the

Oriental Branch of the Hong Kong Veterans Association. He went blind in one POW camp because of malnutrition. When his

eyesight returned, he was sent to a work camp in Japan. Thanks to Maclean's Senior Editor Robert Macquardt

Your war was spent mostly in a work camp, correct?

Wade? It was a slave camp. I was transferred to Japan in '43, to camp 56 in Nagats. We had the most deaths of any POW camp in Japan. My job was unloading coal from box-cars from China 12 hours a day. You got a bamboo pole with 75 lb. of coal in each bar. You went up and down a ladder. Some fell and would collapse and they'd get better up because they weren't doing their load.

What did you survive on?

All we got to eat was a bowl of rice each day with flies and bugs in it. Eventually we got a luxury—pickled grasshoppers from China. The doctors said there were vitamins in them. I thought they'd make a great drink so I went and got a cup of hot water, and their eyes opened and they moved. That was the end of me eating grasshoppers.

Was there anything else?

The only extras we got was when the Americans came in at the end of the war. As far as I'm concerned we went overboard and the Americans brought us back first class. They dropped food, clothing, medicine, even chocolate bars and cigarettes on Nagats. Folks condemned the United States for the atomic bomb. I can tell you I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the atomic bomb. If you read the manuscript of the war crimes trial after you will see every commandant had secret orders. In event of an Allied invasion of Japan all POWs were to be executed.

How did you know the war was over?

On Aug. 15 we were rounded up and sent back to camp. They had speakers set up, and the Emperor said Japan capitulated unconditionally. And boy did we celebrate. The good guards hung around to protect us. But the bad guys took off guards. Then the American bombers came over with coloured parachutes to drop the food. We ate day and night. Fires were burning all over. Everybody had their favourite recipes, and we sang *God Bless America*.

I was 30 feet and 182 lb. when I was taken I came out at 62 lb.

How do you feel about Japan today?

I read about Japanese cars and how well their economy is doing. And we're building Honda right here in Ontario. I would not even buy a Japanese pencil.

The Making of a Canadian Terrorist

From small-town boy to al-Qaeda assassin

Perhaps the most disturbing revelation about the July bombings in London was that they were the work of immigrant terrorists. In *The Murky Dark* (Julia Wiley & Sons), Canadian journalist Stewart Bell traces the path of one such terrorist, Canadian Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, who grew up in St. Catharines, Ont., dreaming of becoming a doctor, and joined al-Qaeda in the months before 9/11. Captured before he could accomplish his first operations—attacks on the American and Israeli embassies in Singapore—Jabarah is an example of what intelligence services are calling the “new generation of jihadists.” They are the children of middle-class immigrants to Europe and North America, and were either born or raised in the West. Educated and computer literate, these recruits have much to offer their terrorist masters, including perfect English and Western passports. For the rest of us, they offer an enigma. In Bell’s words, Jabarah had “money, family, friends, security and a good education. So how did he become a terrorist?” Although he did not interview Jabarah, who has been in a U.S. prison since 2003, Bell spoke at length with his family and had access to what Jabarah told CBS and the FBI

duties who lived in Kuwait, who immigrated to Canada in 1994 when Mohammed was 13, was not a jihadist terrorist. He was keen for his four sons to become Canadians, but he also wanted them to maintain their Arab culture.

Each year he would send the boys back to Kuwait to visit their relatives. Mansour and his wife Samia would stay in St. Catharines with the eldest and youngest, Abdullah and Yousef, while Mohammed and Abdul Rahman spent the summer in Kuwait City with family. During their trips, Mohammed and Abdul Rahman would meet up with their old friend from the Solva neighbourhood, Anas Al Kandari, a student of Salafism. Abu Gaidh, a Kuwaiti teacher and firebrand cleric who preached that fighting jihad was the duty of all Muslim men.

Mohammed had been met here before coming to Canada. Since then, Abu Gaidh had taught in



THE MURKY DARK
Stewart Bell
Julia Wiley & Sons,
\$16.95



SEEKING A more secure life in the suburbs of the first Gulf War, Mansour Jabarah took his young family including sons Abdul Rahman (far left) and Mohammed, to Canada in 1994.

of them drifted to Niagara. Those who settled in the area included Abdullah Daughar and a few “jihadist returnees,” those who had fought in Islamic holy wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia and had come back home, where they served as role models for youngsters. Mo-

hammed and Abdul Rahman began meeting with veterans of the holy wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia. They studied it night up, and were they were speaking the harsh rhetoric of jihad at the mosque. Mohammed started raising money for Algeria fighters and Palestinians. That was an important milestone for Mohammed. Recruiters knew that it was best to ease someone into terrorism, to start them out with duties that help the cause without killing. Terrorism recruited out of the West often start out as sympathizers. Their involvement begins in support organizations engaged in lawful advocacy, but over time they are pulled toward a radical, violent core, often with the help of a friend or family member. News comes indirect involvement

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Mohammed started raising money for Algeria fighters and Palestinians. That was an important milestone for Mohammed. Recruiters knew that it was best to ease someone into terrorism, to start them out with duties that help the cause without killing. Terrorism recruited out of the West often start out as sympathizers. Their involvement begins in support organizations engaged in lawful advocacy, but over time they are pulled toward a radical, violent core, often with the help of a friend or family member. News comes indirect involvement

Boris undelivered to Kuwait with videotapes of the fighting and training that had gone on there. In 1996, he showed the video to Mohammed and Anas. Propaganda videos have long been one of al-Qaeda's most effective recruiting tools. They stick to a simple formula. The opening will show images depicting the plights of Muslims around the world. “The wounds of the Muslims are deep everywhere,” Osama bin Laden rages in one recruiting video. “The Crusaders and the Jews have joined together to invade the heart of Islam and occupy holy places in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.” Next, the video explores the causes of this situation, concluding that if only Muslims would return to the Quran, everything would be fine. It ends with an impassioned exhortation to fight the Jews, the Americans and their allies.

in violence, such as attending paramilitary training camps. That is followed by some sort of passage into the world of violence. In the case of al-Qaeda, this often used to involve spending time in the front lines of the civil war against the Taliban rebels in Afghanistan. Then comes the terrorist training, followed by an oath of allegiance to the leader and his cause and finally, a mission. These are the seven steps to hell. And Mohammed Jibrath was going all the way.

In his final year at high school, Mohammed made a deal with his father. If he dropped school and got accepted into university, he would gain \$50,000. Toward the end of the school year, Mohammed was accepted into St. Mary's University in Nova Scotia. His parents were thrilled. Mohammed told his father he knew what he wanted for his reward—one last trip home to Kuwait.

Entraining young boys to Abu Ghath, Mohammed's reminder, was leaving them in the care of a child molester. He explained his position of authority to his own political fantasies of an Islamic uprising. He was a recruiter in the guise of a religious teacher. Instead of feeding the souls of his students responsibly, he planted the notion of jihad and martyrdom in their pliant young minds, and then helped them join al-Qaeda. He helped them cross the bridge between radical belief and radical violence.

ENTRUSTING BOYS TO ABU GATH WAS LIKE LEAVING THEM TO A CHILD MOLESTER

FOR SOME IT WAS A death sentence.

When Kuwaiti authorities finally got wind of what Abu Gath was preaching, he was banned from his mosque, but his followers remained loyal to him and his ideals. Mohammed started fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. "I think after the last trip to Kuwait, Mohammed changed. He became more religious than before," Mansour says, "but at the same time he was a very good boy." Mohammed continued watching videos of jihad, now those coming out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "He felt shamed about what had happened to his brothers in Palestine," Mansour suggests. Mohammed was showing signs of increased fanaticism, but the watching drove deeper into the social isolation of the convert. Abu Gath paid for Mohammed's plane ticket to Kuwait.

His jihad had begun.

AFTER MOHAMMED was smuggled over the Afghanistan border, he met up with his brother and friend and went with them to the Sheikh Saïd al-Uyay training camp. There were about 20 recruits altogether, all Kuwaiti and Saudi. The instructors were Libyan. The training regimen was intense. Morning prayers started before dawn. This was followed by two hours of physical

training, mostly jogging. The recruits would shower, using well water, and have breakfast. Following the meal the students divided into study groups. They would sit for an hour of classroom instruction, then receive for a 45-minute nap. Prayers were strict, followed by an hour-long lecture on the Koran. After lunch, it was quiet time, which lasted until afternoon prayers.

Then the military training began.

Mohammed's course was called Jibath, which means the "bagging" or "poisoning." It was a basic training course, Weapons of War 101. Mohammed learned how to fire an AK-47, M-16, C-3, Klinkov, RPD, RPK, B8 and Uzi; how to shoot a 9 mm Makarov; how to operate RPG-2, RPG-32 and RPG 18 disposable anti-tank weapons. And he was introduced to the Dragunov sniper rifle. He soon found he had a unique talent for sniping. He was taught how to fire an anti-aircraft gun, and received instruction on the use of Sam-7 and Stinger missiles. There was training in explosives as well—TNT, C-4, C-3 and an array of techniques for dismantling them, including matches, fuses, buzzsaws. As part of their training, the recruits field-tested the explosives.

There was hand-to-hand combat training, using Russian, Czech, Chinese, Egyptian and American grenades. Mohammed

days, but they never said exactly where they were.

"Where are you?" Mansour recalls asking.

"We are okay. We are in an excellent place, we are getting our courses,"

Mohammed would tell his father.

"Don't worry about us. We're safe."

"When are you coming back to us?"

"As soon as I finish my courses I will come back again."

Mohammed was mastering the AK-47. He did well at topography and camouflage as well. When he finished the course, he asked if he could go to the Taliban base. He had spent weeks studying to fight. He wanted to test his skills in live combat. In December 2000, the Jibrath brothers went north to the Taliban frontlines and fought Mansour's Northern Alliance rebels, who despised the Taliban and were stubbornly clinging to a small

patch of territory along the Taliban border. Two weeks in the trenches was enough. Abdul

would have to pledge bayat, the sacred oath of allegiance. The concept of bayat dates back to the 6th century but was co-opted by al-Qaeda in the late 1980s. When al-Qaeda was created, bin Laden set out what he called the "requirements to enter al-Qaeda," a final requirement was that prospective members had to read "the pledge" of loyalty, or bayat. The Mafia has a similar ritual called omerta. It's an act of personal surrender, in which an individual places himself entirely in the hands of his leader, organization and cause. The original bayat, found by U.S. investigators in Bosnia, reads "The pledge of God and His covenant is upon me, to listen and obey the command, wherever I am doing this work, in emergency, early rising, difficulty, and easiness, and for his superiority upon us, so that the word of God will be the highest, and His religion victorious."

Jibrath was ready.

An appointment was arranged and he had an audience with the "Most Wanted" in Kandahar. They sat together, and bin Laden told bin Laden that he was ready to join al-Qaeda. He explained that he had excellent English language skills, a "clear" Canadian passport and that he had done well at his al-Qaeda training courses. Bin

Laden was impressed. He told Jibrath that he must be ready to



Rahman left for Kuwait while Mohammed returned to Kabul to study the Koran and take a course on Islam. Mohammed had swapped the al-Qaeda trainers. He was earning a reputation in Afghanistan, but his name was also beginning to surface in Canada. In February 2000, CBS got its first glimpse of bin Laden, laughing out with veteran Muslim fighter and raising money for Chechnya. CBS started making preliminary inquiries about the Jibrath boys. Ineligibility agents came to Mansour's home at St. Catharines. They wanted to know about Abdul Rahman and Mohammed were doing in Pakistan. Had they crossed into Afghanistan? Did they intend any criminal camps? The agents returned negatively.

"Where are they?" Mansour recalls one of the agents asking.

"Why?" Mansour replied, "are you looking for my sons?"

AT SOME POINT, recruits had to make a critical choice: Were they willing to go all the way, to give themselves to Osama? If so, they



Mohammed, age 26, at Mansour's father's house. Abu Gath, al-Qaeda propagandist video showing Jibrath's militant activities training group.

fight the "enemies of Allah, wherever they are," and specifically mentioned the United States and the Jews. Osama then asked bin to swear an oath to al-Qaeda, which Jibrath did. He swore the martyr's oath.

AFTER BEING SENT TO PAKISTAN, Jibrath was given \$10,000 in cash for expenses in the first week of September, and told to proceed to Malaysia for his first mission. "Wake up," he was warned by a senior al-Qaeda figure, "you leave before Tuesday." The day after he left, Jibrath was in Hong Kong, watching the million video loop of planes crashing into the Twin Towers. Later, when photographs of the hijackers were shown, he recognized four of them as fellow al-Qaeda trainees he had met at a gathering in Kandahar that March. Underscored by the mass murder in New York, Jibrath carried on with the planning for the Singapore attack: six truck bombs would explode simultaneously at locations around the city. Local Jibrath would do the planning and preparations, but Arab suicide bombers would be brought in by Jibrath at the last moment to carry out the operation.

But Singapore investigators caught a lead, one of the few who knew almost everything about the plot, and Jibrath had to

for. He eventually ended up in Ottawa, where he was captured by authorities. Two CBS agents were stopped from spying. Surprisingly, Jabarah spoke freely to them, and co-operated with CBS in making a deal with the Americans—of sanctuary in exchange for leniency.

HE SLEEPS NO MORE than an hour a night. He spends his days exercising and studying. He has a daily fitness routine and passes the remaining hours re-reading the Quran and reading books about history and Islam. Every few weeks, an official from the Canadian Consulate in New York stops by to visit him, and he complains about his imprisonment. The consular officials note that he looks well but remains disoriented, and they send an update back to headquarters in Ottawa. When he first went into U.S. custody, at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in lower Manhattan, he was only 20 years old. In December 2004, he celebrated his 23rd birthday at MCC. He has stopped co-operating with the FBI. He talks only to his lawyers, the Canadian consular officials and his family. In the letters he writes home in near Arabic script.

When I first read Muhammad's letters, I expected to find some expressions of remorse. He clearly did wrong, but he did right in

the training and the motivation to become another martyrdom."

It has been four years now since his prison saw him last, the man who set off to follow his religion and got lost. He would atone by the bottom leaders of politics, those who seek to advance their death cult ideology by convincing the youth of the Muslim world to commit cold-blooded murder. They named a handsome, educated and otherwise moral young man into a killer. Bin Laden sent Muhammad off to slaughter and die for the cause while he and his rickshaw Al Zawahiri stayed hidden in caves along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

"I'm asking you this question," Mansour tells me in our last discussion. "What Muhammad has done since Canada, what transferred him to the United States? And what Muhammad has done to the security of America?"

"He told CBS, 'I reply, 'that he was involved in plans to blow up an embassy in Singapore.'"

"Nothing happened?" Mansour says. "Muhammad has never done anything. I'm repeating, Muhammad has never done anything against the security, either Canada or America."

"You don't consider training in Afghanistan to be against Canada or America?" I say.

BIN LADEN THEN ASKED HIM TO SWEAR AN OATH TO AL-QAEDA, WHICH JABARAH DID

the end. He gave himself up and talked. These were signs of a young man who had come to his senses. Proud from the grip of al-Qaeda, he had swapped out of it, undergone his youthful experiment with jihadism. Or so I thought. But when I was shown his dispatches from prison, I did not get the same at all. His letters were with his remorse. They are filled with the rhetoric of his al-Qaeda masters, about "believers" and "infidels" and not being "harshly the state's rule." He writes specifically about his imprisonment, and signs his letters using his al-Qaeda name, Abu Hali.

What happens? Maybe the shock of losing his best friend and then his brother—the first during an attack on Karachi-based American Marines, the second in a shoot-out with Saudi forces—swapped him back into his holy warrior persona. Muhammad's mistakes may have become evidence of the severity of the charges he would face. If he surrendered handed to the United States thinking he was going to get off with a slap on the wrist, he was badly mistaken. But the apparent he negotiated and signed suggests he was hardly duped. And Jabarah is not a stupid young man. "Muhammad Mahmud Jabarah is one of the most intelligent terrorists we have seen," says Robin Gammage, a Singapore-based scholar and renowned al-Qaeda expert who knows the case intimately. "I had the education, the contacts,

"No," Mansour says. "Why? A lot of people trained in Afghanistan, in Chechnya, in different parts of the world."

There are a lot of things we still don't know about Muhammad Jabarah, but we know enough to say that he joined a despicable cause and devoted himself to it. We also know that he did not do so entirely on his own. He was hauled down that path every step of the way, beginning at a criminally young age.

There is, however, no running back for those who have pledged the martyr's oath.

"I'm trying my best," Mansour says.

"This is our dream now. We lost one. We lost Abdul Rahman with our army mission and we don't want to lose Muhammad now."

Later, a letter arrives at my office from the U.S. Bureau of Prisons inside is the inmate Data sheet for prisoner 00999-091. It is a print-out of Muhammad Jabarah's file in the prison computer system.

Under the heading, Projected Release Date, the sheet reads: "UNKNOWN."

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It Could Happen Now

Some Canadian Muslims aren't rulling out violence, writes ADNAN R. KHAN

CANADA'S MUSLIMS are scrambling. Over a month after the July 7 bomb attacks in London that killed 52 and injured dozens more, deep fissures are emerging in a community grown weary of defending itself against the actions of a very few of its members. In the aftermath of the 7/7 attacks, dissenting voices are battling for the ears of Muslims. On the one hand, the vast majority of leaders are asking their community to be ever more vigilant against extremists. But a vocal fringe group has taken a harder stance. Led by Niy

Hindy, a controversial and famously outspoken imam at Toronto's Salaheedin Islamic Centre, they are escalating out against what they see as a concerted effort to destroy the Islamic faith. While the former group was quick to condemn the London bombings outright, Hindy provided only a qualified condemnation. "We have seen our Muslim brothers and sisters killed all over the world," he told *Maclean's*. "In their blood worth any less than the 90 or so people who died in London? This is not a war against terror, it is a war against Islam."

Moderate wary that battle of ideologies is pushing Toronto's Muslim community into opposing forces. "From an Islamic perspective, it's easy to exploit young minds," says Muhammad Butt, president of the Muslim Students Association at York University. "You can add words to the interpretation of the Quran. In Pakistan, for example, some madrasah [Islamic schools] teach young students to live as straight [holy warriors] and die as martyrs. It's an atmosphere of violence that turns these kids into violent adults."

The process has already begun, according

to 22-year-old Omar Chaudhary, a worshipper at another mosque near Toronto's Little India district, especially among those youth struggling to survive in the poorer neighbourhoods. Many of his friends quietly celebrated the attacks in London, he says, though they would never admit to it openly. Chaudhary himself can't deny the racist conspiracy and the loss of innocent life, but supports the ideology behind such attacks. "You know, I pay taxes," he says, struggling to justify his perspective. "Those taxes feed the government, which then pushes them over to fund the war in Afghanistan. My money pays for bombs and bullets that are used to kill fellow Muslims. So too feel like this could be on my hands."

The Canadian military's current move into Afghanistan's volatile Kandahar province adds another variable to the already simmering mix of emotions. A recent awareness by Canada's military base, Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, that the job of Canadian troops "is to be able to kill people," has angered many Muslims, who see it as a sign

that Canada is stepping outside its historical role of peacekeeping.

"That statement caused a lot of anger among young people," says a visibly irritated Chaudhary. "The angry about Canada's role in Afghanistan." In fact, he says, he could imagine some realisation in Canada if the troops got more involved in active campaigns against the Muslim population there. "If things got worse there because of what Canadians are doing in Kandahar," Chaudhary adds, "then there could be an attack. You know, it's like shaking a can of pop—if you keep shaking it, it will eventually blow. Best thing is to leave it alone in a corner."

Hindy demands to put an end to the war in Afghanistan. He says it is a war on Islam.

THE SALAHEDDIN Centre sits in a poor neighbourhood, a first undeclared by the scratchy-looking man begging for change at the front entrance and following worshippers in to tell them a down-and-out tale of job loss and pain. Rumours among the city's Islamic community here is that the centre is influenced by the Salafi branch of Sunni Orthodox Islam, the laudible version embraced by militant factions like the Taliban and al Qaeda. The Salafis have a penchant for targeting the poor for conversion to their religious version of Islam. In Pakistan and parts of Europe, in Africa and the Middle East, they set up their schools and mosques in the most impoverished regions. In London

it was the Finsbury mosque, headed by the now-dead Imam Abu Hamza, that spread the militant message. That mosque was closed down in 2002, re-opening in 2004 after an announcement that it had purged its congregation of extreme elements. Now Canadians are wondering if a similar bombing could happen here—and if Canada has a Finsbury.

The answers, according to most experts and Muslim leaders, are no and not really. At least, not yet. "There are no terrorist groups operating in Canada," insists Hindy, though he admits there are some extreme elements within the community. The 66-year-old, Egyptian-born cleric, who arrived in Canada 30 years ago,

says. "Only if the Americans were it." That type of rhetoric has got many Muslim leaders in Canada on the defensive, fearing that accusations of violence would send the wrong message to angry and disillusioned

imam who agreed to talk on condition of anonymity, noting that Hindy has condemned all attacks against innocent civilians, "but more an issue of how he's saying it."

Guiding young people away from the radical path has become a central theme in discussions within Toronto's Muslim community. At the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, Zain Khan, head of media relations, urges political and religious leaders to focus on fortifying young minds against harmful groups like the Salafis, not covering out radical elements within the community. "There is always the danger that these groups are operating," he says. "We just don't know. If they are, they are not according to



WITH CANADIANS FIGHTING MUSLIMS IN KANDAHAR, 'THERE COULD BE AN ATTACK'

has caused a rift in recent weeks among Muslims and non-Muslim alike with his unapologetic views on events like the London bombings and the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, and his instructions to Muslims not to co-operate with Canadian security forces. A flyer at his mosque, titled "Exposing the 9/11 Lies," invites worshippers to a meeting in mid-August to discuss the "conspiracy" that draws Muslims were involved. Hindy himself insists that many of the more serious incidents over the past few years, including the London bombings, were not planned and executed by the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, and the CIA. "If there be an attack in Canada?" he



asked Muslim moderates like Khan, the most pressing concern is making certain Canada's Muslim community, especially its youth, does not devolve into a radicalized extreme. And that, says Khan, is a sacred responsibility of the Canadian authorities as well as of Muslims themselves. "There has been a marked rise in profiling by police since the London attacks," says Khan, "usually against Muslim youth. The problem is that what you marginalize young people through continuous profiling, then you have a seed chest of these kids being prepped up by extremist groups." For Butt at York University, the problem with radicalized youth lies in a poor understanding

ISRAEL'S LANDSCAPER

Ariel Sharon is doing nothing less than remaking his country's map, writes JONATHAN GATEHOUSE

TWO RECENT stories about Ariel Sharon from the Israeli press.

One dark night a couple of weeks back, a group of 20 far-right activists gathered in a village near the Sea of Galilee. Standing at the grave site of Yitzhak Rabin, a member of the right-wing Kach movement, hanged by the British in 1938 for shooting up a bus full of Arabs, they took ritual baths, dressed themselves in black, and then dressed as Rabin. They were laying an ancient Hahshar death came on the head of the Prime Minister. If anyone protest couldn't stop the dismantling of the settlements in the Gaza strip, they reasoned, maybe the biblical Angels of Destruction would take care of matters. After all, back in 1995, the group had run the same spot on Yitzhak Rabin, shortly before he was assassinated.

This past week, the news was more flattering, if still creepy. An unnamed Israeli man, the son of an army medic, had put a blood-soaked bandage (his allegedly drained Sharon's) head in the 1973 Yom Kippur war up for sale on eBay. The Prime Minister, then a daring Israeli army major-general, was wounded in a tank battle with the Egyptians at the Suez Canal. The daring military officer, which evoked the invading Egyptian army and forced its surrender, made Sharon a national hero, providing the springboard for his leap to politics soon after. The opening bid price for the creepy game is US\$10,000.

To say that Israeli hold strong opinions about their 77-year-old Prime Minister is a vast understatement. His love of bold gambles at both the source of his mystique and his greatest weakness. (A prosecutor par excellence, it was Sharon who is frequently credited with lighting the fuse for the current conflict, with a visit to opposition leader to the Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem's Temple Mount in September 2000 that triggered off waves of Palestinian rioting. He subsequently came to power by vowing to quell the violence.) But since finally capturing the political office he had coveted for more than



The bandage carrying the wounded general in 1973 is for sale on eBay—opening bid US\$10,000

three decades in the 2004 election, Sharon has moved the nation dramatically. By pulling out of 21 settlements in Gaza and four in the northern Samaria region of the West Bank, and embarking on an ambitious plan to split off the West Bank, he is remaking the map of Israel. By weathering the mass outrage of the settlers and their supporters he is changing the political landscape.

Now, with his patchwork coalition government fraying and another election on the horizon, there is growing speculation Sharon might bail out of the party he helped found in 1975, and forge a new, centrist option. Whether the Prime Minister has a ministerial plan, or is simply flying by the seat of his pants, is the subject of hot debate. But the polls seem to be believed, even if they

have no idea where they are going. Sharon is going to be the one they choose to follow.

THE ISRAELI government is always careful to refer to the 640-km long barrier that it is rapidly building around the West Bank as a "security fence." But in and around Jerusalem, it is clearly a wall—an impenetrable 8.5-m-high line of grey concrete that sweeps urban neighbourhoods and seals along the hillside outside the city to enclose the expanding old-looked settlements to the east. The UN has denounced it as a violation of Israel's human rights obligations. It isn't difficult to find Palestinians with tales of hardship in its shadow. "Before this miserable wall, 15,000 people passed by here every day," says Haimon Kishorim, the owner of a small grocery in Alva Dab, just outside the Old City's walls. "Now I don't have 10." Kishorim says he will soon be forced to close the shop that has supported his family for 50 years. "This is a barrier between Palestinians and Palestinians—I don't understand it."

Most Israelis, however, are clear on the wall's purpose: to make it more difficult for



A well-protected Prime Minister inspects houses newly built for Israelis relocated from Gaza

people to lose themselves upon restaurants and on buses. And they support it in overwhelming numbers. "In terms of public opinion, it's a fair enough," says Ilanur Horowitz, a pollster and public opinion researcher at Tel Aviv University. "Close to 80 per cent agree with it as a security policy, and it's one issue that brings people together on the left and the right." That's because it is difficult to argue with success. Since construction started on the barrier in the summer of 2002, the number of suicide attacks has dropped precipitously.

Sharon's disagreement plan may be an overstatement. Support has been running around 55 per cent, and public feelings about his government's social and economic policy elsewhere, but security remains all in Israeli politics. And his measure has success in that opinion alone should be enough to deliver him another mandate. "He's going to take it by

default," says Horowitz. "People won't say about his other accomplishments, but basically, as one the comes down."

Technically Sharon doesn't have to call an election until the fall of 2006, but at his own point to launch heading to the polls sooner. Labour Leader Shimon Peres has said his commitment to his party's coalition with Likud ends after the Gaza pull out, which should be completed by late fall (page 29). And Benjamin Netanyahu's resignation from cabinet over disagreements sets the stage for an internal struggle for the leadership of Likud. But the religious "Bibi," while popular abroad, is not greatly loved at home when his Republican-style tax reforms and cuts to social spending in domestic matters have caused him suspicion at home. Even if he were to wrest control of Likud away from Sharon, the old general might yet have him running under a differ-

ent banner. One popular scenario has Sharon joining forces with Peres, 80, and Yosef (Zeev) Lapid, 74, leader of Shimit, the secular party, to form a centrist democracy. Likud has never had a majority government in its history—14 parties are represented in the current Knesset. And Likud won the last election with just 40 of the 120 seats. The threshold for becoming prime minister could be even lower this time around.

The bigger question is what kind of coalition the eventual winner will be able to build. The bitterness over disengagement has shredded Israel's fragile national consensus. And there is little agreement on the road forward. "There has never been such a direct and adamant challenge to the government or a government decision," says Ilanur Horowitz, a Tel Aviv University political scientist and observer of the Israeli scene for five decades. "I honestly don't know what is going to happen next, and I don't think anyone does." Some are even more pessimistic about the future. The fight has "doomed us to many more years of darkness, crippled democracy, conducted in the shadowy anonymity of this period," Avram Burg, a former speaker of the Knesset, wrote recently in one Israeli newspaper.

If the settlers and religiously right have won anything with their protests, it is the general acknowledgment that no future government wishing to pull out of the West Bank or hand over parts of Jerusalem in the search for peace and security is in for an even tougher battle. The emotional and historical claims to Gaza pale in comparison to many of the other settlements now deep in the Palestinian state of the 1967 green line—places with biblical significance.

Whether Sharon will be willing, in the run-up to the elections or during a second mandate, to charge deeper into the fray is a never-ending question. But few observers would have picked him as a likely candidate to leave Gaza. "There's an expression we use in Hebrew—he has no god in his back," says Uri Ben-Ner, a political columnist for the daily Haaretz, and author of Sharon: An Israeli Caesar. "His no-commitment, no ideology. He's quite opportunistic and pragmatic is a critical word." The desire of politicians to leave a legacy behind is universal. It's just that in Israel, that usually means making history.

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UNWELCOME VISITORS

When Israel soldiers took over most of Khalil Bashir's Gaza house, he refused to move out

IF ALL GOES according to plan, Khalil Bashir will host a massive party one day soon. He is already busy inviting friends and family he has rarely seen over the past four years, the other sons of the late al-Bashir in the Gaza Strip, even his soon-to-be-former Israeli neighbors. Chances are the latter group will not come—the years of violence forcing back and forth across the high walls of Kfar Darwan have left no love between the settlers and nearby Palestinians. But Bashir's challenge will not be so easily discouraged. To him,

the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza means just one thing—he'll finally get the top floor of his house back.

Troops from the Israel Defense Forces have occupied the second and third floors of Bashir's spacious family home since December 2009. The property, located in the shadow of a machine-gun tower, 150m from the walls of the settlement, has been mined. Bullet and shell fire have scarred its roof and eaves. The 16 garages, 170 palm trees and orange grove were pulled down and plowed over to create a military buffer zone. Camouflage netting and razor wire prevent the observation post as the building roof, with its surrounding view of the area.

Bashir has remained a non-violent, but particularly emblematic way. If you can

find him from the Israelis to buy his property he refused orders to move. And when the soldiers finally came to take it over, he would not leave. Instead, the school principal, his wife, their eight children and his agent mother spent much of the past four years sharing the main floor. At night, the family was frequently confined to the living room and/or armed guard, the children to leave even to use the bathroom. During the day, they lived under strict conditions—no unauthorized visitors, limited access to the property outside. "I did not want to make the same mistake my people made in 1948," says Bashir. "They left their houses and now they are refugees."

The pullout means Bashir (relative) is going to get his damaged home back.

Bashir says he has no idea why the IDF chose to occupy his house. But there is a long history between his family and its neighborhood. Kfar Darwan is one of the oldest Jewish outposts in Gaza. Established in 1930, when the area was under British control, it was given up a few years later during a period of unrest. In 1946, it became a kibbutz, but was again abandoned after a siege by the Egyptians during the 1948 war. The Israeli military has been on the spot since 1978, and the settlers came soon after. Although Kfar Darwan is one of the first communities scheduled to be evacuated when the pullout begins on Aug. 17, none of its 73 families has so far accepted the government relocation package. The settlement has also been the repeated target of attacks by militants. In 1992, a community's rabbi was stabbed to death. In 2003, a roadside bomb hit a senior conveyance in the area, killing two. The next year, one of its IDF defenders was killed by a Kassam rocket fired from Dair al-Balut. Although Bashir swears no attack was ever launched from his property, the settlers and soldiers know it as "the sniper house."

Bashir and his family have paid a heavy price for their obstinacy. After the rabbi's death, a mob of settlers broke in and destroyed his home. He admits it. When the current conflict flared up in the fall of 2009, the field surrounding the building was set ablaze. The IDF shot one of Bashir's sons in the leg as he tried to put it out. In April 2010, after a CNN camera crew visited, a rifle grenade hit the house, and Bashir was wounded by shrapnel. In February 2004, his son Yusef, then 15, was shot in the back by soldiers as he and his father stood outside waving goodbye to three UN staffers who had come to visit in a clearly marked vehicle. Bashir lives with constant pain.

Through it all, Bashir has remained one of the few in his neighborhood to preach tolerance. Every morning, he leads his 1,800 students in a chant of forgiveness: "I have forgiveness and forgiveness everything the Israeli have done against me," he says. "If we insist on letting our damaged economies grow up, we will never go forward." That's why the coming elections will be up to everyone. "I hope a lot of the pullout will teach everyone some new lessons."

THE PULLOUT 'WILL HAPPEN'

The former prime minister expects Israeli settlements in the Gaza strip to be dismantled in four weeks

Former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres led his opposition Labour Party over a coalition with Ariel Sharon earlier this year to save the Gaza disengagement plan. With Sharon now on the horizon, the vice-premier is considering how much longer he wants to prep up his rival. Last week, the 1994 Nobel Peace prize winner discussed Israel's future with Jonathan Gatehouse of MailOnline.

The Gaza pullout starts this week and some settlers are vowing to resist. How firm is your government's resolve?

Finally firm. The dismantling of the settlements will happen, and the majority will leave without resistance. I think it will take maybe four weeks to complete.

What does disengagement via mean?

Disengagement means Israel is having one of those thoughts about the settlements. That the majority of Israelis understand there's a need for a Palestinian state—that we have no choice but to partition the land. If we don't, we risk losing our Jewish majority. We don't want to control the lives of Palestinians. That's against everything we stand for.

So is a pullout from parts of the West Bank the next logical step?

There will be a division of opinion about the West Bank. I don't think there will be a majority for a complete withdrawal, but neither will there be a majority not to move at all. It will be the middle road. But that too depends upon the capacity of the Palestinian leaders to control the situation in the territories and bring a halt to terrorism.

Labour's commitment to the coalition ends after disengagement. Why?

I've said that's true unless there is a continuation of the peace process. We didn't enter the government for power's sake. We entered to provide stability for the peace process. If that process is terminated after Gaza, we have no reason to be in the government.



But if the negotiations continue, we shall remain and support them.

You're party objected to Benjamin Netanyahu's budget. Does his resignation make it easier to stay in the government?

Essentially yes, because we remained in the government in spite of the policy, not because of it. But I hope the new finance minister will change things, not only because of our pressure, but because the latest poverty figures call for real change.

If you become the next prime minister, what will you do differently?

I will clearly continue the process of peace. And while I will insist that the Palestinians have to do their share in obtaining the peace

and fighting terror, I wouldn't make it a condition. That puts our fate in the hands of the terrorists.

You worked closely with Yasser Arafat. Is his replacement, Mahmoud Abbas, a better partner for peace?

Yes. Arafat had different periods in his life. Without him, the peace process probably wouldn't have started. But with him, it wouldn't. Arafat's position is clear. But he's facing difficulties he didn't create.

What measures should the Israeli government take to end Abbas?

We have to encourage him economically, encourage him in his attempt to build a single command for the armed forces. And we have to support him politically.

Does that mean opening the borders, or providing him with arms, two of the things he's asking for?

The borders should be as open as we can make them. The arm-provision is more complicated. If they really need them to fight Hamas, then I think we have to help.

The polls have Sharon out front. Some of his policies, like the security fence, are very popular. Would you keep it?

The fence is a result of the intifada, and the fence necessary as long as there is the danger of the intifada.

You see the path to peace opening, but do you think the population is ready?

Yes, the majority are for it, but it very much depends on the performance of the Palestinian Authority. It's popular in Israel to say it's the Palestinians' own fault, that they're not good partners. I hope the PA will find the strength to continue.

There's been talk about a Big Bang in Israeli politics—your joining forces with Sharon to create a new party.

I am not convinced that that is a realistic proposal. I don't see that Sharon is ready to split Likud. And it's one thing to split, it's another thing to combine.

Would you be willing to listen to such a proposal if you thought it was serious?

The Lord provided me with the responsibility of the news in Israel. But listening and deciding are not the same thing.

PRESIDENT ALLEN?

A little-known senator has been named most likely Republican nominee for 2008

OVER A GUFFET LUNCH in a firehall in the northern Shenandoah Valley, the man who may be the next great hope of the Republican party is adding 100 supporters how many of them drive an SUV or a pickup truck. The majority raise their hands. "It's great to be in America!" exclaims Senator George Allen. He proceeds to scold the "offensive attitudes" in Washington with their elitist point of view "who want stricter fuel efficiency standards for the vehicles. But as he moves on to a chafe "across judges" who "violate the law," and a United Nations "ruined by fraud and abuse," he does so politically, more debater than politician in his voice. And that could make all the difference.

The little-known senator and former governor of Virginia has been named the most likely Republican presidential nominee in 2008 by 103 congressional Republicans and influential senators polled by the *National Journal* magazine. Clean cut, dark-haired and youthful at 53, Allen is a business conservative who once considered state as a recreational vehicle, possessing his staff to drive for blocks to save two cents a gallon on gasoline. He's also a Presbyterian father of three who takes socially conservative positions without wearing religious on his sleeve. His ultimate rests on his potential to marry the libertarian and religious wings of the party. "He is not motivated by gay rights or abortion. He is a fiscal conservative first, and a moral man, rightly to the rights of right conservative," parries his former classmate, Larry Sabato, political scientist at the University of Virginia, where Allen earned history and law degrees. He would not be the first choice of evangelicals, says Sabato, "but they'll accept him."

Allen is only about 2008. "It's very on assuming that people say all that, but I am focused on doing my job," he told *Washington Post* to the early primary state of New Hampshire, and numerous out-of-office contributions to his US\$5-million Senate re-election war chest, suggest otherwise. "Everyone knows he's running for president," says



Not such a dark horse: bookies have George Allen neck and neck with John McCain

Mike McHugh, president of the Virginia Gun Owners Coalition, who came to the firehall to hear Allen vow to uphold gun rights. "He's the closest thing to Ronald Reagan since Ronald Reagan," he adds.

Born in California, Allen has a wayward career that dips into Virginia history. "Thank y'all

ONE man came to hear Allen vow to uphold gun rights, 'He's the closest thing to Ronald Reagan since Ronald Reagan.'

for the great work," he says to his hosts, and smiles while explaining his philosophy. "So long to someone is not becoming someone else, don't be a nanny. Don't be a molder. We need less intrusion in this country, less litigation, and less regulation."

The son of a firehall Hall of Fame also named George Allen, Allen inherited his father's politics and cooperative work. He'll

need it—the ticket is wide open, although none of the big names offer perfection. John McCain is a maverick. New York's Rudy Giuliani and Governor George Pataki are pre-chosen. The Mormon governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney, has run a largely liberal state. Kansas Senator Sam Brownback is an emblem of the religious right. Senate majority leader Bill Frist has fumbled major agenda items. If superman Condi Rice, Dick Cheney or John McCain is out of the race, Allen could be as good as it gets.

For many who ran for president, a Senate seat is a loss of faith—permitting few concrete accomplishments and yielding tangled voting records. But Allen amassed his reputation while governor from 1994 to 1998. His welfare reform was "the toughest in the country," he boasts. He cut off benefits to single mothers who did not identify the fathers of their children—and dramatically raised paternity identification rates. He expanded school standards and shooked parents for failure.

In the Senate, he worked to ban taxation of Internet transactions and to increase the death payment to bereaved military families from US\$12,000 to US\$190,000. He also chaired the Senate Republican's Finance and Commerce Committee on the last election, building a national donor network, and sharing credit for an expanded GOP majority. But Allen still wobbles on the delicate issues that divide the party. He says he will federal funding for embryonic stem cell research—but only if it does not involve the destruction of embryos. He talks about the "need to keep spending in line," while praising the passage of a US\$286 billion, pork-laden highway bill and a US\$14.5 billion energy bill.

That is time to refine his message. Firehall offers various political lessons, he observes. Among them, "You don't want to wait until the opening week of the season to start grunting." He says "With that, he climbs back into the RV that will take him to a college football practice, his own big game will three points away. ■



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THE CHINA BUBBLE

Corrupt bankers, bad loans and speculative frenzy. ANDREA MANDEL-CAMPBELL asks whether China is heading for a Japanese-style economic reckoning.

REMEMBER JAPAN? Back in the early 1980s the Land of the Rising Sun was, once again, the world's most feared invader. But instead of military might, the new Japan was riding behind industrial muscle and corporate modesty: firms such as the Rockefeller Center and MGM Studios were being scooped up like so many billion-dollar bubbles. As Japanese cars and televisions flooded the market, Westerners marvelled at the country's

technological wizardry and its platoon of ardent workers whose labour was only stopped short by *karoshi*—Japanese for death by overwork. Who could compete with that? At the time, it seemed, a new world was dawning and Japan would be its champion. It seemed inevitable, right up until it fell apart.

Fast forward 20 years and the world is facing a new Asian deluge. If Japan was a surging tide, then China is a tsunami. The globe's most populous country turned mass-escaping juggernaut has one-fourth of low-cost labour and has surpassed national champions taking the world by storm. Its economy, which has been growing above nine per cent for a decade, has already surpassed Japan's size, and is expected to overtake the U.S. by 2040. Its voracious appetite for energy and resources has sent commodity prices skyrocketing and its cheap manufactured goods power consumer spending around the globe. With its sheer drive for material success, after centuries of deprivation, China seems unstoppable. But is it? Or is it just history repeating itself?

As it goes, Japan's economy crumbled like houses of cards. The yen, which had been kept weak to promote exports, was eng-

reered upward to rule in fast growth, igniting a speculative real estate bubble. When it burst, the banks, which had lent money to companies based on their real estate equity, were left virtually bankrupt. Trillions in personal and corporate wealth disappeared overnight. The explosion revealed structural rot beneath the economy's seemingly endless success. The upshot was 15 years of stagnation that Japan is only just now emerging from.

China is, in many ways, following in the footsteps of Japan's early success. Nobel prize-winning economist Robert Mundell recently compared China's ramp-up to Japan's beginnings as a low-cost manufacturer in the 1950s and '60s. And now, like Japan was in the 1960s, China is focused on expanding into international markets and on developing new technology for sale to the world.

But other similarities are more disturbing. Andy Xie, chief Asia economist with U.S. investment bank Morgan Stanley, points to the US\$350-billion speculative "hot money" that has poured into China in recent years on the expectation that its currency, the renminbi (or yuan), would appreciate. Much of that money has been parked in real estate in the recently privatized housing market goes



Beijing's new airport, tented part of China's massive construction blitz

through an unprecedented boom. In Shanghai, prices skyrocketed by 28 per cent last year, with desks outside

towers, office high-rises, hotels and malls being thrown up in a breakneck pace. The vacancy rate officially stands at 2.7 per cent, but anecdotal evidence suggests up to 40 per cent of the new space sits empty.

Speculators just got their first whiff of the potential payoff after the Chinese government bowed last month to mounting international pressure to revalue the renminbi,

abandoning its decade-old peg to the U.S. dollar. China's central bank has pledged to keep a tight rein on the currency, which was boosted a mere 2.1 per cent and will now trade within a narrow band against a basket of international currencies. But Bridgewater Associates, a U.S.-based manager, estimates that with the renminbi now unleashed, a 25 to 30 per cent gain is "inevitable" over the next three years.

If currency traders are right, the revaluation heightens the risk of a massive road to financial ruin, as speculation looks to cash in. Observers fear that could, in turn, push the country's already shaky banking sector

into a tailspin. "The revaluation of the renminbi enhances the possibility for a tremendous amount of property to fall the market, and prices will go into a free fall," says Ken DeWolfe, a well-known strategist, and a partner at U.S. accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers in Beijing. "It's the most significant crisis on the horizon."

Still, many don't believe China is headed for a Japanese-style collapse. "We talk about it behind closed doors," says one Beijing-based adviser to the government, who preferred not to be identified. "But the consensus is, it won't happen here." There are plenty of differences between the two

economies. Unlike Japan's insular economy, China has become the leading destination for foreign investment, sucking in US\$260 billion in the past five years. Foreign multi-nationals account for nearly 60 per cent of its exports. China also has a cheap and flexible workforce. And, unlike many other developing countries, it has virtually no external debt and a high savings rate.

Even with all those advantages, however, China is still vulnerable, in part because its phenomenal success has kindled envy in the government and the ruling Communist party to rising economic and political stakes. "Many of the new generations of leaders are

overly confident," the government adviser says. "They've gone from a planned economy to a market economy and they have never gone through a recession or severe economic downturn. It's hard for them to imagine China could ever go through an economic crisis like every other country in the world. They don't appear to be bracing themselves for the real potential problems."

And the problems, like everything in China, are mind-bogglingly huge. At their heart is a dysfunctional, corrupt and virtually bankrupt financial system. Private enterprise doesn't exist, and the country's banks have racked up as much as US\$800 billion in bad loans, mostly doled out to weak state-owned enterprises that churn out cheap, inferior products in a thinly veiled effort to keep all loans employed in the absence of a social safety net.

The government in Beijing has tried to clean up the banks' books and present a semblance of financial order by offloading US\$325 billion in bad debt to state-run asset management companies. But, like the banks, these groups are headed by Communist party officials, and they've shown little interest in disposing of the loans. Instead, they prefer to swap the bad assets among themselves at inflated prices favored by central bank loans. Ironically, part of Japan's failure to settle sailing accidents in the 1990s, the Chinese asset managers have dumped tens of billions of dollars since 1999, collecting just 20 cents on the dollar.

While all that debt languishes in murky obscurity, a new crop is being groomed. The government, anxious to have more foreign investment and build up production capacity, has been on a frenetic building spree—adding in high-speed railways, power-generating and state-of-the-art airports. New steel mills, concrete plants and slum-clearing architects have sprung up like weeds, while five-star hotels jostle for dust in provincial business-leisureland deserted golf courses.

The level of capital investment, equivalent to half of China's gross domestic product, is not only highly inefficient, but unprecedented, says DeWolfe. "No other economy in the world has maintained in the econ-

omy to such a degree. It's a situation that is fundamentally not sustainable." In addition to some US\$500 billion in bad loans generated in 2003, as much as another US\$100 billion is in the pipeline, says Mike Harris, a partner in PwC consulting. "It's pretty frightening if you think about it."

So far, Beijing has solved its problems by throwing more money at them. Flush with a whopping US\$711 billion in foreign currency reserves, the government recently spent US\$160 billion buying out three of the country's biggest banks, and is expected to

in provincial and local government debt, and mounting military budgets. Add an other US\$250 billion in many petroleum and energy sectors needed to feed China's insatiable growth, and the state of foreign currency stands to look "inadequate," as DeWolfe says. "Pressure is building for some kind of adjustment," he adds. "What we don't know is if the incentives or things can keep going for another 10 years."

Nicholas Lardy, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, has been predicting China's financial

Market watchers believe real growth going forward should be in the six to seven-per-cent range. While that is still more than double what Canada can expect to see, it's a sudden deceleration for China and a difficult cause for concern to the government, observers say. (Although the official growth rate was 9.5 percent in 2004, economists estimate the real number was somewhere between 12 and 15 percent.) Such a slowdown opens up a whole new set of concerns for the ruling Communist party, whose grip on power is a result of two central prop-

rieties. Foreign banks like HSBC and Bank of America, anxious to get in on China's US\$1.5 trillion in banked savings, have been buying in at every opportunity. But again, some see more profit than potential.

Many of the banks' balance sheets are inflated by dubious bonds that are not guaranteed by the government. So, if the economy does hit a soft spot and the banks are forced into bankruptcy, foreign investors would be left holding the bag for billions in losses. In the words of Elliot Wilson, a financial journalist with the Hong Kong-based *Standard* newspaper, investing in Chinese banks is "like a man betting his kid's college fund on a three-legged horse."

The real wild card, though, is corruption. The financial system is rife with tales of shadiness involving billions of dollars and top bank officials. The former chairman of the China Construction Bank is serving a 12-year jail sentence for graft, and his successor stepped down in March, under investigation by the party for "violation of discipline." Some of the more startling stories include a bank manager who disappeared with US\$100 million in cash, and another scheme involving 69 people charged with swindling US\$494 million in bank funds.

Many are hopeful the threat of an economic slowdown will force the party to spend up much-needed reforms, but others remain skeptical. The government is relatively untested when it comes to undoing decades of socialist rule, and its ability to make quick, informed decisions is bogged down by a global adherence to consensus-building and a generation of leaders born of the extremely destructive Cultural Revolution.

That raises many frightening possibilities, not just for China but for all those investors who've pumped billions into its risky enterprises. "If the Chinese banks collapse, the whole world economy collapses," Wilson warns. "The world economy is very dependent on China in ways we still don't completely follow, and we won't for another five or 10 years." We do, however, know that when Japan arrived at its day of reckoning, the rest of the world escaped relatively unscathed, and the lessons learned faded quickly. Should the same fate befall China, the pain will be spread far and wide. It's not something we're likely to forget. ■



Stalling stocks and slowing exports, observers question the sustainability of China's boom.

put up another US\$150 billion to rescue the ailing bond market, among the world's worst performing exchanges and currently limping along at an eight-year low. More money is expected to flow to dozens of businesses teetering on the edge of insolvency after dabbling in shady financing schemes.

But the bulls keep moaning. Standard & Poor's, the U.S. rating agency, estimates it would cost as much as US\$190 billion just to clean up two of the country's largest banks. Then there is some US\$314 billion

doled out for years. Given the country's already heavy fiscal burden, a slew of new non-performing loans coupled with a downturn in the economy could be the last straw. "The question is, when the economy goes through a downturn, how many loans are going to go bad?" says Lardy. "Will it be manageable, or a massive tsunami that the banks can't handle?"

And there is little doubt that there will be a downturn eventually. The government is trying to hold things together until after the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. But there are indications that the delicate balancing act of government-subsidized production is beginning to teeter under the strain of overcapacity and ballooning inventories. Foreign investment is down, cities are shrinking and profits are being squeezed as companies on everything from oil pipelines to car conditioners are forced to drop.

creating wealth and keeping a lid on the always-lurking threat of social unrest. With 12 to 13 million people entering the workforce each year, the party needs to keep the economy humming at a minimum seven-per-cent growth. "China works on a bicycle theory," explains Yuen Pau Woo, chief economist at the Vancouver-based Asia Pacific Foundation. "It's like to keep going forward. If you don't, you fall off the bicycle and you may not be able to get back on again."

To keep the economic wheels spinning and attract more foreign capital into its weakly financial sector, Beijing has been working hard to clean up its four largest banks—adapting Western-style management and accounting practices in preparation for their debut on international stock

WHEN the economy hits a downturn, how many loans will go bad? Will it be manageable, or a massive tsunami?

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LIGHT(EN)ING UP

Anti-smoking lobbyists have suddenly developed a sense of humour in their fight to gelds to butt out

LAST MONTH, in an attempt to shock British youth into bailing out on the vice, the U.K. government unveiled a slick advertising campaign designed to subvert the deeply entrenched sex appeal of smoking. One of the ads, highlighting the link between smoking and male impotence, features a cigarette positioned suggestively between two "fingers" with the tagline: "Your penis thinks you should stop smoking." Others in the series warn young women that not only will "dags" give you yellow, "smoking" teeth, but that over time, the lip-puckering required for smoking will produce an undesirable wrinkling effect, colourfully described as "an'it's been smooth."

Suddenly and improbably, the anti-smoking lobby has developed a sense of humour. In North America and abroad, the movement is producing some of the most inventive, and even borderline raucous, advertising to ever target youth—in print, online and on TV. Last November, Ontario unveiled its "Scared or Smoker?" campaign, in which the act of smoking was equated with smearing oneself with dog feces. In Nova Scotia, the government launched a series of TV ads—part of its "Great Reasons to Smoke?" campaign (www.smokefree.ns.ca)—in which Terry and Denise, the hockey-loving hosts from the 2002 hit movie *RUBBIE & DAVE*, were idly about the social and economic benefits of tobacco usage (for instance, all of the smoke breaks had you an extra three days off a year if you add them up).

Governments and non-profits, it seems, have finally grasped something consumer advertisers have known for years—that youth are an extremely separate market and need to be addressed in "their own language." They've also figured out that, for the American Post Generation, the worst fate imaginable is not premature death, but looking like a schlock in front of your friends. Coincidentally or not, the ads have dovetailed with dramatic declines in youth smoking rates.



British ads (left) subvert smoking's sex appeal. The U.S. "Truth" campaign (above) mocks industry health concerns and inspired Canada's "Scared or Smoker?" campaign.



120,000 men in the UK are impotent as a result of smoking (Source: BMA)

Nationally, there were two approaches to urging young people not to smoke. First were the sombre you-smoke-you-die ad-fest featuring brooding music and some part of the industry blackened and covered with lesions—well, aside from a momentary group-out drill, rolled right off the backs of kids in the pines of immortality. Then there were the hyper-carnal ads in which health minister Cecilia Quigley's clean pop sing-

ers (such as Carli and Luke in Health Canada's "Break Free" campaign, since 1985) to wag their fingers to darky backbeats and dance on sound stages poorly disguised in gritty urban settings. Both approaches communicated the same message: Adults think cigarettes are very, very bad. Which, for adolescents looking for any way to shock and disappoint their parents, just made smoking seem all the more attractive.



From an advertiser's perspective, anti-smoking messaging poses a particularly difficult challenge: to take something that's been perceived as cool since well before James Dean made it a symbol of disaffected youth everywhere, and make it uncool,

even girly. The American Legacy Foundation, a Washington-based non-profit group, pioneered the now non-tobacco advertising with its award-winning "Truth" campaign, launched in 1998. Developed by Arnold Worldwide, a top-tier U.S. agency whose clients include Nike and Volkswagen, the "Truth" campaign uses dark humor to take aim at the tobacco industry itself. The underlying message: "They're lying to you. What kind of an idiot do they take you for?" In a slick online domain, *Real Don'ts* (www.realdonts.com), accessibly smug tobacco executives in 60-second episodes, which interspersed with lines taken from the minutes of actual industry meetings and set to a tizzy laugh track. During last year's Super Bowl, one of the industry's belated concessions that cigarette smoking is harmful to your health by featuring a fake company that manufactures from trash lined with shards of glass. "A Mouth Of Glass Precious Pops," says the mock executive, "our goal is to be the most responsible, effective and respected developer of glass-based consumer products intended for adults."

Evidence suggests "Truth" is achieving its goal. In 2002, the U.S. National Youth Tobacco Survey showed declines in high school smoking of 18 per cent over the previous two years. Research in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that there were approximately 300,000 fewer youth smokers in the U.S. by 2002, as a direct result of the campaign.

Inspired by that success, the Ontario government, with the help of Toronto advertising agency Bernheim Byrne & youth marketing firm Youthography, did some research of its own and found that the one thing young smokers and non-smokers agree on is that smoking is stupid. The resulting "Stupid or Smoker?" campaign—aired at teens and young teens before they were created, with the help of a youth advisory committee, is sound like kids talking to kids, so it would look completely at home wedged between two MuchMusic videos. In one ad, a youth holds

a lightning rod in the middle of a field during a lightning storm. In another, a teenage boy adorned with antler tips through the forest at the height of deer hunting season. There are no Ontario minimum legal cigarette-to-you-ty to identify them as government fun.

"We deliberately chose to focus on social fiction," says health ministry spokesperson Kevin Foxworthy, who oversees the campaign, which includes TV, print and online components, was a little "edgy" for the government. "Our research told us that kids don't want to hear health care messages from authority figures, but they will listen to messages about social consequences from their peers." Smokers' rights groups were outraged. Nancy Diagona, president of Nicheo Inc., criticized the government for conveying a "denigrating and disparaging" campaign. "I hope we do not see a repeat of the incredibly offensive and repugnant ads in which smokers are portrayed as smoking like—to use the exact quote—'dog traps'."

Still, as in the U.S., attitudes of Canadian youth toward tobacco use appear to be changing. According to Health Canada, smoking among teens has decreased dramatic-

cally among 15- to 19-year-olds, from 18 per cent in 1999 to 10 per cent in 2004. This may be the cumulative result of a larger, multi-pronged attack, including stricter legislation, label warnings, and increased taxes. So while the organizers of "Stupid or Smoker?" can't claim sole credit for the decline, they know their audience as a paying attention: they've had more than 600,000 unique visitors to the website since it launched in November.

"The idea is to create this new sort of brand identity around smoking," says Mike Farrell, director of research and strategy for Youthography, "as though it's just not something that anybody really does anymore—and you're kind of old school or old-fashioned by doing it."

Ironically, just as Canada is cracking down on tobacco use, it's shattering bits of its historic identity as a consumer—and as a result, say some experts, young people are perceiving the latter as a significantly less dangerous habit. "The smoking," says Farrell, "has gone up massively among youth."



NOTHING TO BLOG ABOUT

The hype behind Internet weblogs is more thrilling than the reality

BLOGS ARE GOING to change the world for the better. Ask anybody.

But first, chances are you may have to ask, "what is a blog exactly?" Don't feel too bad about this; you have plenty of company. Recent surveys suggest most of the population still hasn't heard the buzz about blogs, even though they first made headlines as an "Internet craze" as far back as 2001. Since then, the hype has intensified greatly. But if blogs are indeed world-changing, somebody has apparently failed to notify the world.

First things first: A blog (short for "weblog") is essentially an online diary, where any-

body with simple computer skills can post anything—random musings, photos, screeds, poetry; you name it—for the world to see.

To the believers, the genius of the technology is in the sheer volume of material it throws into the public domain. Blogs, they say, counteract the entrenched biases of the powerful mainstream media, or MSM, making mass communication a free-ranging conversation rather than a monologue. And now, with millions of self-appointed media watchdogs joining the fray every year, there isn't a shadow on the night that doesn't get belated at it in the Blogosphere. Thus, we're told, is a tomorrow step forward.

Ironically, it's the much-dreaded MSM that's most in love with the fledgling blog phenomenon. Recently, the *New York Times* reported that 80,000 new blogs are created every day, and nervously enthused that blogging is "a profoundly human phenomenon, a way of expanding and, in some sense, fulfilling the age-old daily conversation that humans engage in."

A couple of months back, *BusinessWeek* offered a rapturous cover story entitled "Blogs will change your business," warning that companies hadn't already figured out how to harness this new world-by-marketing and through them—they were already in deep trouble. Blogs "are simply the most explosive outbreak in the information world since the Internet mail," it gushed. "To bolster its case, the article cited numbers frequently cited by the bloggers: that there are at least one million blogs now on the Internet, and growing fast; and that 27 per cent of Internet users claim to read them.

With an audience that big, and growth so explosive, there must be a major social and business phenomenon happening, right? Well, let's just take a deep breath.

For one thing, there are wild discrepancies in the estimates of how many blogs are actually out there. Some figure the number is as high as 30 million worldwide. But once you strip away pseudo-blogs that are really ads or scam traps, and subtract dormant sites, the numbers plunge precipitously. A couple of sites dedicated to tracking blog traffic estimate only about two to five million blogs are actively maintained.

Still, that's a lot of blogs and lots of readers. Or maybe not.

It was late last year that the *New Internet & American Life Project* reported two seem-

ingly interesting facts: that 27 per cent of Internet users regularly read blogs, but that 62 per cent of the online population still didn't know what a blog is. In fact, 49 per cent of those who said they read blogs then said they didn't really know what a blog was. Do you read blogs regularly? Oh, yes. Do you know what a blog is? Um... no.

This little comedy routine played itself out 143 times in a survey of just over 1,300 people. But that didn't stop the believers from interpreting that blog readership scored 58 per cent in 2004. What they often fail to point out is that the overwhelming majority

of blogs get almost no traffic. According to data from Statcounter and other tracking services, more than 99 per cent get fewer than 10 hits a day. Even the ones that do attract readers don't add them up in a very real way. The same reports suggest that the average blog reader stays on a site for just 90 seconds.

Comparing the total blog audience to the circulation of major newspapers or viewers of network newscasts is a total sham. Let's say you never watched a single episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond*, but you dished pan it many times while channel surfing. Maybe you even paused occasionally to remind yourself of its utter lameness. Does that make you a viewer? It does in the blog world.

And what about that explosive growth? Well, instead of an update to its survey earlier this summer, and found that in the first few months of 2005, readership sharply declined to about 25 per cent of Internet users.

Why? Perhaps it's because blogs are plagued by the same problems that have plagued the Net from day one. Murky sites are dumping grounds for every kind of online sewage, from virulent hatred to simple-minded polemics and laughable hoaxes. And with thousands of new voices joining the fray every day, separating the insightful from the noise is only getting more cumbersome. As a result, people are mindlessly clicking on the blogs they know and trust.

Usually by prominent writers or celebrity commentators. In other words, the blogs that matter are quickly becoming just another extension of the divided MSM.

Will blogs fundamentally change the media business, or any business for that matter? Well, did de-a yourself wine lift change the wine industry? Think about all the home-made planks you've had to drink over the years. Sure, everybody thinks so until they served up in a plastic bucket at their house event turns disastrous. But try selling it. ■

Send Steve Marich's weblog, "All Business," at www.merich.net/allbusiness

BLOG BELIEVERS often fail to point out that the overwhelming majority of blogs get almost no traffic. More than 99 per cent of all blogs get fewer than 10 hits a day.

ingly interesting facts: that 27 per cent of Internet users regularly read blogs, but that 62 per cent of the online population still didn't know what a blog is. In fact, 49 per cent of those who said they read blogs then said they didn't really know what a blog was.

Do you read blogs regularly? Oh, yes. Do you know what a blog is? Um... no. This little comedy routine played itself out 143 times in a survey of just over 1,300 people. But that didn't stop the believers from interpreting that blog readership scored 58 per cent in 2004. What they often fail to point out is that the overwhelming majority

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'DEVASTATED'

Canadian music icon Leonard Cohen is broke and the lawsuits are flying. As KATHERINE MACKLEM reports, it's a sordid tale involving allegations of extortion, SWAT teams, forcible confinement, tax troubles and betrayal.

*I said there's been a flood
I said there's nothing left*
—Leonard Cohen, from *The Letters*,
on his album *Dear Heather*

TAKE AN ICONIC ARTIST, music making, millions, tons of intricate art, a genius recipe with other talented details, and a supposed relationship with a long-time, trusted associate, and you've got the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Except in the case of Leonard Cohen, it's a true tale, with the iconic poet of a Tibetan Buddhist using a Zen Buddhist, Cohen. For the 70-year-old poet, singer and songwriter, it's a nasty, rapidly escalating legal battle that on the one hand accuses him of conspiracy and extortion, and on the other has him accusing both his highly trusted personal manager and long-time financial adviser—the Tibetan Buddhist—of gross mismanagement of his financial affairs. The case exposes not only private details of Cohen's finances, but also a dramatic tale of betrayal.

The conflict, which Cohen and others have tried to keep out of public view, has left him virtually broke—he's had to take out a mortgage on his house to pay legal costs—and facing a multi-million-dollar

tax bill. But the artist, who is soon to release a new album with his collaborator—and current girlfriend—Anjani Thomas, is today remarkably calm about the potentially embarrassing conflict. Still, when he discovered last fall that his retirement funds, which he had thought amounted to more than \$5 million (all figures U.S.), had been reduced to \$353,000, he wasn't so sanguine. "I was devastated," Cohen says. "You know, God gave me a string over me, so I wasn't shattered. But I was deeply concerned."

So far, only one formal court filing involving Cohen has been made. In June, Boulder, Colo.-based Neil Greenberg, Cohen's former adviser of almost a decade, launched a hyperbole-laden lawsuit in Colorado against Cohen, who lives in both Los Angeles and Montreal. The suit accuses Kelly Lynch, who was Cohen's manager and also named in the suit, of siphoning money from the songwriter. It also accuses Cohen and his lawyer Robert Kory of conspiracy, extortion and defamation. It alleges the two, in an attempt to recover at least some of Cohen's

The poet, songwriter and singer is in the kitchen of his home in Los Angeles



last money, threatened to besearch Greenberg's reputation and announced a plan to force Greenberg to give Cohen millions of dollars.

The suit paints an almost preposterous picture of Cohen as an artist who had a lavish celebrity lifestyle and then turned bitter and vindictive when he discovered the money had run out. For example, the suit quotes Lynch describing how Cohen demanded the discuss business matters while he soaked in a bubble bath, and how later he was somehow involved in calling a \$100,000 room to her home, where the two had sex and family take a psychiatric ward while in her bathing suit.

None of the allegations have been proven in court. Cohen is expected to file a counter-suit this week. Macleanists are likely to reject the story. And Lynch, who has sent target, new and wealthy friends and you, who are entering to see just about everyone.

The co-plaint was triggered last fall when Cohen was ripped off by an investor that a lot of money was missing from his accounts. All that remained of his retirement savings was the \$150,000 funds that today he can't get at as a result of the tangled legal web he finds himself in. Greenberg's suit portrays the faithful songwriter as an artist who paid little attention to his financial affairs and so was easily duped by a convincing personal manager. Cohen says he sent queries, and confidentiality, to find out from his various managers where the money had gone. Cohen calls the case "a tragedy," suggesting he was exploited by trusted advisers. He uses words like "greed, concealment, and reckless disregard," and says firmly he did nothing wrong. "I can assure you, within reason, I took every precaution open to question the fidelity of my closest associates."

UNITE, COHEN fired his last fall, Kelly Lynch had been his personal manager for almost 17 years. Back in 1988, he'd been working as an assistant to his then manager, who died that year. Because she was knowledgeable about Cohen's business affairs and accepting contracts, he had her take over. Over the years, the two developed a personal and professional relationship. Fifteen years ago, they had a brief affair. "It was a casual sexual arrangement. It was mutually enjoyed and terminated," he says. "I never slept the night." The end of the



Neal

November 8, 2004
Dear Neal,

I believed in you. I depended on you. We communicated regularly by email. There was not a single note of alarm in all your correspondence, but after a business-like determination on your part to maintain the structure that, according to more than one email, you admired and endorsed, even though you admitted that it was complicated (but when things went wrong, does it make any sense that you would make your earnings available to the only person in the company who had an interest in discovering me? A single, simple email informing me that my accounts were being emptied would have been enough. I answered EVERY SINGLE EMAIL you ever sent me. Fortunately, I have them all.

Face up to it, Neal, and square your shoulders. You were the trusted guardian of my assets, and you let them slip away. We all make mistakes. Do the honorable thing. Inform what you feel, and sleep well.

Put this behind you and it will decline.

Love,

after didn't affect their bond. "We were very, very close friends," Cohen says today. "I loved her immensely. Our families were close—she was helpful when I was raising my daughter, I employed her father." He even named her in his Willing will, giving her the power to decide, in certain circumstances, if he would live or die. He trusted her vast powers of attorney. He trusted her implicitly. And he believed the relationship was mutual. "She went dozens of errands to me, thinking me far my help. We used to correspond regularly, occasionally." He says that in 2004, while he was recording his most recent album, *Dear Heather*, with a small team at his home-recording studio, Lynch would come by almost daily. "People were very tight. Kelly



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The cozy arrangement was shattered one day last October when a young man, the boyfriend of a casual employee of Lynch, spoke to Cohen's daughter, Laura, who owns an art and furniture store and who lives downstairs from her father in the L.A. duplex he owns. "Your father really ought to look into his accounts, because he might be surprised at what he finds," he said. Laura told him that her father trusted everyone involved and that besides,



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in which he would insist that he was leaving because he had been bankrupted by nepotism by Greenberg and other financial advisers. Greenberg must have convinced his business and his career in absolute terms. He said.

Greenberg's lawsuit lays out the business background to the dispute. Cohen's success as a singer and songwriter generated millions in royalties, the suit says, and in the 1990s, Lynch, as Cohen's trusted personal manager, began to investigate auctioning his financial properties, including copyright to his song catalog and continuing royalties for his songs. Lynch, along with a now-convicted partner, Richard Worth, arranged two deals for Cohen's properties. The transactions were eventually completed, once in 1997, the other in 2001, with Sony Music. From the first sale, about \$3 million was transferred to trusts that Greenberg had been enlisted to manage and that would protect Cohen from an upstart tax fix. Greenberg says he intended the proceeds mostly, making lots of money for the trusts. But Greenberg also claims that Cohen's "constant and prolific spending" to support "his extravagant 'celebrity' lifestyle" eroded the gains he had made on his client's behalf.

The second sale of Cohen's intellectual property, in 2001, was for \$8 million. With Worth, Lynch took that money into a newly formed company named Traditional Holdings LLC that also was intended to shield Cohen's earnings from a major tax hit. Lynch was named as owner of 99.5 percent of the company, leaving Cohen holding 0.5 percent. Greenberg alleges that Cohen, well aware of the structure and endgame, signed off on it. Worth had explained to Cohen, the suit says, that "the plan would only work if Cohen and Lynch maintained (as they had in the past) a long-term relationship of personal and professional trust." Traditional Holdings could also lose income to its owners, Lynch and Cohen.

As soon as the new company was in place, "Greenberg was immediately alarmed by Cohen's desire and tendency to treat this company [Traditional Holdings] like his personal piggy bank," the lawsuit alleges. It goes on to claim Cohen took a \$1-million advance on the second sale of assets to Sony. Lynch took a commission of \$1 million, and four law firms and accountants set up another \$714,000. And then, over the next

FROM GREECE TO MIAMI VICE

Some highlights from the life story of one of Canada's most famous poets

■ In 1950, at 34, Cohen was awarded a Canada Council grant of roughly \$2,000. He used the money to travel throughout Europe and, ultimately, settle on the Greek island of Hydra, where, in 1960, he bought a modest house without electricity or running water for \$1,500.

■ In Hydra, Cohen wrote several collections of poetry and two novels, *The Favorite Game* (1962) and *Beautiful Losers* (1966). The latter was an explicitly sexual post-modern comedy that journalist Robert Felford called "the most revolting book ever written in Canada."

■ In 1968, Cohen was awarded the Governor General's Award for poetry for his collection, *Selected Poems 1966-1968*. He declined the award, stating, "much is more true for this honour, but the poems themselves forbid it absolutely." He reportedly went to the party anyway.

■ Cohen confounded his fans in 1984 by appearing on the hit TV series *Miami Vice* as a guest-starring role as François Zerk, head of Interpol.

■ In the early '90s, Cohen, ever the ladies' man, was rumored to have been engaged to Rebecca De Mornay, the seductive star of 1993's *Only the Lonely*. She was 30 years his junior.



■ In 1990s with the money he owed

few years, Lynch regularly borrowed money from the Traditional Holdings account in amounts of tens of thousands of dollars, sometimes for herself, sometimes acting for Cohen. The lawsuit claims that while Greenberg sent a monthly email statement to Cohen, it was always Lynch who told Greenberg to release the loans.

The Greenberg suit claims Lynch, always acting as Cohen's agent, told Greenberg what to do regarding the funds. For instance, Lynch instructed Greenberg to send Cohen the monthly small claims reports, but Greenberg says she directed him to leave out day-to-day activities and the status of Traditional Holdings loans. He claims the loans were to be repaid. Greenberg included them in the statements as assets, which meant that if upped as though nothing had been taken out.

Greenberg, who declined to comment for this article, claims in his suit he repeatedly accused to Cohen that his spending was seriously depleting his investments. In one warning letter, Greenberg told Cohen that Traditional Holdings had only \$2.4 million left. Considering how quickly the money was leaving the account, Greenberg wrote, "I think you should consider your situation quite desperate." It's not clear if Cohen ever received this letter. On this, Cohen and Greenberg agree: they say many of Greenberg's attempted communications with Cohen were intercepted by Lynch.

On other points, Cohen disagrees. He was visibly interested in his financial affairs, he says. "It wasn't that I wasn't involved—on the contrary, I took great pains to pay these professionals well and to solicit their advice and to follow it," he wrote. "And I was receiving a report every month from Neal Greenberg indicating that my retirement savings were safe." Cohen insists he was not made aware that Lynch had been named the majority owner of Traditional Holdings. Instead, he says that in an early description of the company's structure, he had been told that his own children, Lorca and Adam,

would be its principal owners. He says he was shocked to learn that Lynch had almost complete ownership. The lawsuit Cohen admits to is that "I paid close attention to everything except the possibility that my closest associate would embrace my irregularities in the discharge of her duties."

Cohen also says he learned only recently that the two sales of his intellectual property to Sony were unnecessary. He understands now that these properties earned roughly \$400,000 a year, before taxes. That was plenty for him to support what he calls

his modern lifestyle. Cohen accuses Lynch of creating the deals in order to boost her own income. He paid her 1.5 per cent of his income, which generally earned her \$90,000 a year, he says. With the sales of his intellectual property bringing in revenue in the millions, it boosted her income to seven figures.

Greenberg's lawsuit becomes more disturbing as it describes what happened after Cohen realized he'd lost millions of dollars.

Greenberg says Cohen pressured him to go after his firm's insurance company for the money to repay him. "Be a man," Cohen told Greenberg, the suit says. By threatening his reputation, it appeared to Greenberg that Cohen, on Kory's advice, had decided to target Greenberg's and his insurance company's deep pockets. Then, alleges the lawsuit, Cohen and Kory began to pressure Lynch to join them in "their extortion scheme." From November 2004 to April 2005, the lawsuit says, Kory repeatedly let Lynch know, sometimes directly, sometimes through friends or other intermediaries, that Cohen was ready to "forgive" Lynch's obligations to him, and that she in fact could receive a hefty cut of "whatever funds could be extorted from Greenberg and other advisors with her cooperation."

Greenberg's suit alleges that when Lynch refused to participate, Kory and Cohen vowed to "crush her." It goes on to say their "intent to terrify, intimidate, or disparage" continued on page 47



A Cohen self-portrait from earlier this year

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AIR CANADA 

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



Cover | >



Greenberg's girlfriend Lindsey says she was shocked by the attack.

continued from page 46
Lynch included threatening her that she would go to jail, and "paying two parole officers to make statements that they had observed Lynch's older son brandishing a gun and threatening to kill someone."

with you," it says. "Why not—let's see who is better at tactics—you or me."

So troubling have the messages become that several people who know Lynch fear she's become unhinged. "I'm afraid she's suicidal," says Lindsey, her ex-husband, adding that in his judgment she's been acting erratically for the better part of a year. Cohen told sent Lynch a message last fall spelling out his concerns in verse. No coo? No difference between a threat / and a helping hand, he wrote. No coo? No difference between a threat / and a solemn warning / from one of the few people / who care about you and your family.

In the meantime, she's been showering Cohen and others with invasive, hateful emails that alternately voice misery and boast accusations at friends and former colleagues. Many of these latest loving-comedy of her 12-year-old son, Ray, to his father, music producer Steve Lindsey. A few delusionalists outright blame Cohen. One message, sent July 17 and obtained by Maclean's, in-

cludes Greenberg, in highly explicit terms to Lynch's home for an evening of tantric sex. "Rita I want to study the inner channels

And two of her creditors—opposite department stores Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman—have filed collections claims against her in Los Angeles Superior Court.

THIS IS THE MESS that Leonard Cohen—a man many believe dived a few inches above the ground—finds himself in. These days, he's Zen-like. In the course of a long interview by phone from his home in Los Angeles, the man sometimes called the poet laureate of pessimism sounded almost bemused. "What can I do?" he asks. "I had to go to work. I have no money left. I'm not saying it's bad, I have enough of an understanding of the way the world works to understand that these things happen."

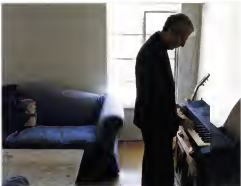
His first choice of action when he learned his money was gone, he says, was to not do anything. Aware of how painful bankruptcy could be, he says he wanted no part of it. "I said, 'I can walk away with nothing,'" he said. "Let's move again. Let me start fresh at 70. I can cobble together a little rent, eat again." But the morose gliding, immediate problems, had he done nothing, he would have legally been responsible for the funds that had gone missing. And that money, he'd owe

collaborators in music, a man he no longer had. His next step, "his second best choice," was to negotiate with his adviser about the missing money. He approached Lynch, asking her to open her books. "She not only and unconditionally refused to open her books to any scrutiny whatsoever and instead began a bitter email campaign to discredit me in some kind of way, which has gone all over the place," Cohen says, adding that he's launching a lawsuit this week with great reluctance. "I don't want anybody hurt. It's not my nature to pursue and to contend with people that way." Cohen says all his wants is to find out where the money went. "I'm not accusing her of theft," he says of Lynch. Still, his counter-claim will likely describe how money was removed from his accounts.

Cohen appears to have been blindsided by Greenberg's lawsuit. He insists that he and Kory were in the midst of mediation with Greenberg when the financial adviser's lawsuit was suddenly and unexpectedly filed. He says the mediation had been confidential, at Greenberg's urging, as he feared for his reputation. In an email to Greenberg, Cohen urges him to make good. "Dear Neil, I believe in you. I depended on you," Cohen wrote in November 2004. "When things went wrong, does it make any sense that you would make your warnings available to the only person at the company who had an interest in deceiving me? A single, simple email informing me that my accounts were being emptied would have been enough. I answered EVERY SINGLE EMAIL you ever sent me. Fortunately, I have them all."

"Once up to us, Neil," the email continues, "and square your shoulders. You were the trusted guardian of my assets, and you let them slip away.... Restore what you lost, and sleep well." In his reply, Cohen declined as much a piece of advice as his own philosophy: "That's what I want you and I will disclose." There is an irony here, that a man who has struggled much of his life to distance himself from the material world now, at 70, finds himself in an intense battle with it. Still, he isn't deluded: "This has propelled us into momentous work," he says of himself and Thomas. He remains optimistic about their new CD. "It's one of the best albums I've heard." It's not closing time quite yet.

WITH CHARLIE GILLES AND BRIAN D. JOHNSON



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Cohen's lifestyle seems anything but lavish

THROUGH INTERVIEWING him over the years, I've developed a lot of a relationship with Leonard Cohen. We stay in touch by email, and if I'm in Los Angeles or Montreal, the two cities he calls home, I might look him up. A few weeks ago, I joined him for dinner at his home in L.A. with his 36-year-old daughter, Lenox, and a friend. Leonard served matzo ball soup and beef brisket, a dinner prepared by a friend's mother and dropped off at the door. It was a Friday night, Seiler, and before the meal they sang an Hebrew (Though a Rosh Hashanah, Leonard maintains some Jewish traditions.) That night he

told me what he'd hinted at months earlier in an email—that he'd been strangled of most of his assets, and was mixed in a legal battle with his money manager, who would accuse him of embezzlement. He said it would get nasty and personal, and that his name would be dragged through the mud.

Now, after reading the pre-emptive lawsuit filed against him, a 24-page screed that reads like a satirical subplot, I know what he meant: It's bizarre, and sad. But I had to laugh. In trying to portray this 70-year-old as a criminal mastermind, his accusers kept referring to his "extraneous" celebrity lifestyle. "I've

had a glimpse or two of that 'lifestyle' and by celebrity standards, at least, it seems decidedly spartan."

His home in Montreal, which he bought in 1972, is a sparsely furnished, unadorned row house without air conditioning. There are a few Persian rugs scattered about. The most luxurious item, which he seems quite fond of, is a recently purchased Tompa-Polka bed, with a fair-sized television set at the foot of it. His house in L.A., on a leafy middle-class street not far from downtown, is a modest duplex with no pool. His daughter lives downstairs. There's a small recording studio in the backroom, a portable CD player serves as the sound system.

Leonard enjoys and wine. I like the vintage good bottle when I come for dinner, but he's usually got something less expensive open. One night in L.A., after possibly serving a dinner of Jerni soup that he'd made himself, he sat about trying to fix an old toaster. The toaster has no dishwasher. The only sign of extravagance I could detect were three kinds of premium toilet paper in the house, which was stocked with TV dinners. Leonard doesn't go out much. He and his partner, Anjuna Thomas—who lives down the street—do catch the occasional movie. Leonard saw *War of the Worlds*, which he said was "dumb...and that's a word I never use." But it was at the mall, not at a Hollywood premiere.

In a triumph of redundancy, the lawsuit against Cohen describes him as a "famous celebrity"—not to be confused, one supposes, with all those unknown celebrities. Leonard is, indeed, famous in Canada as well as in some other countries, such as Norway. If he decides to tour again, he'll have no trouble making out concert halls around the world. And in Montreal, where he's a person saint, he does get recognized on the street.

But in Los Angeles, a town saturated with stardom, he's virtually anonymous. More legend than star, Leonard has achieved an ideal level of celebrity. He knows how to play the game and how to win the media. In 1994, he wanted for five years to serve

as a monk at a monastery on Mount Baldy in southern California, and lost five of losing his place. He knew that when he came down from the mountain and re-entered the fray, several grantmakers offered him would be there waiting for him—as he sang in *Boogie Street* "You wanted at the traffic jam / They're saving me a seat."

For those fans, Leonard's financial woes may come as a blessing. Now that he's broke, he's had to find the line under a career that has been quietly smoldering. He's putting the finishing touches on a long-awaited collection of new poetry, the *Book of Longings*, which Macmillan & Stewart plans to publish in March. He's eager to record a new album in the fall and hopes to tour—for the first time in 12 years. And when I visited him last month, he played me an unreleased recording of a morning album of new songs he's produced for his partner and collaborator, Anjuna Thomas.

Titled *Blue Alert*, it's a collection of jacobine ballads, with Anjuna singing Leonard's words and accompanying herself on piano. The project, which Sony will release early next year, originated when he picked up a notebook of his lyrics lying open on the coffee table. Anjuna, who began singing backup for Cohen in the '60s, has an angelic voice. But here she drops her soprano down a notch and sounds like Cohen reincarnated as a woman. With her hypnotic vocals, *Blue Alert*'s steady songs put her in a league with Diana Krall and Norah Jones. And though Cohen doesn't sing a note on the album, his voice permeates it like smoke.

Leonard now admits to being strongly happy, although he concedes that being waged out financially and having your name blackballed "is enough to put a damper in your mood." But his chronic depression, which lasted more than a decade ago on Mount Baldy, has not returned. "With massive discipline I get up at 4 a.m. to write, and days to the peace of the morning before the lawyers' phone calls and emails break the spell." The last time I saw him, he read me an ancient Sanskrit scripture that says that, internally, you must be "free of hope and desire," while externally you should "do what is to be done." Those years of estrangement and tension on Mount Baldy have not been in vain. When you're broke on Boogie Street, a little Buddhist detachment may prove invaluable. **B**

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When the parents get busted, children by the dozens go into foster care

SANDI GRIFFITHS sits in the principal's office looking at the two aunts, 13 and 14, consulting the best way to tell them their niece has been arrested and they can't go home. Just three hours earlier, police had busted their affluent home in York Region, neighbouring Toronto on the north, and uncovered a basement full of marijuana plants. They called Griffiths, a Children's Aid Society worker, who gathered some clothes for the girls. She stuffed two teddy bears into their suitcases, hoping that would somehow help soften the blow. She is briefing the news to them at the end of the school day, when their classmates are no longer around to ask too many questions or ease their fears.

These girls are part of a growing problem across York Region, where Chinese and Vietnamese gangs are using young children and families as fronts for their marijuana operations. In sprawling suburban communities of overgrown lawns, freshly painted garages and blooming flower beds, Children's Aid has seized more than 140 children in the past three years, some with marijuana plants in their closets. In an effort to avoid suspicion, gangs have been moving away from their earlier practice of operating in crummy houses, says Det. Don Cardwell, head of the region's grow-up team. Asian families serve as perfect covers, blending into the Chinese-dominated, affluent south end of the region, made up of the towns of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. Growing marijuana has become a full business in this area, where over the past four years police have seized plants with an estimated street value of \$197 million. Leafy fines, short jail terms and conditional sentences have let offenders quickly get back into the business, says Insp. Karen Nishida.

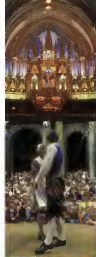
As the gangs change their methods, doctors,



local police and aid workers are concerned about the emotional and physical impact on young children from knowing their parents have been arrested and being exposed to medical and chemicals on marijuana grow-ups. "Hearing a 12-year-old daughter, I can't imagine what makes these parents do what they do," Cardwell says. "There can't be

enough money in the world to expose their kids to these risks."

Dr. Gideon Koren, a pediatric toxicologist at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, agrees. He examines children seized in York Region and conducts research to assess the long-term effects. While it will be some time before he can reach a definitive conclusion, Koren knows



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that insecticides used in marijuana operations can cause serious harm. "Nerve gas made from the same organophosphates that are in the insecticides," he says. They may inhibit a critical enzyme called cholinesterase in the blood stream. "This affects important nerve action and can possibly lead to acute poisoning, gastrointestinal, bronchial respiratory problems." Korn says mould, poor ventilation and closed spaces can cause allergic reactions and asthma. "It's appalling," he says, "that these people use children as shields."

Children's Aid has found children living in disgusting conditions, says Griffiths. In some cases, even in houses that look fine from the outside, bedrooms and bedrooms walls are covered with mould, wrap-around electrical cables are lying around, there is little furniture, and just mattresses on the floor for beds. "Sometimes, there is no food available, their clothes are dirty and they are living in unsanitary conditions," says Martin McNamara, CAW's executive director. Finally wrong is also a big concern, adds the Child Abuse Unit's Det. Steven Hyman, who is heading an intensive custody agency's efforts on kids. Eager to circumvent supposedly high security bills, the residents bypass their rights by hooking up straight to the powerline. "It's dangerous situations," says Hyman, leaving children exposed to possible fire or electric shock.

GRIFFITHS IDENTIFIES herself to the two sisters and asks if they know why she is here. "Does this have anything to do with the cops who came to our house today?" asks one, whose friend had seen police around their house when she went home at midnight. Griffiths nods her head. "Your mom and dad have been arrested," she says. "Do you know why?" Both girls say no. As Griffiths explains, one sister says, "My heart broke for them," she laments. "They were nice. Every-one is going to think we are terrible people."

Grow up children need to blame themselves when their parents are arrested, Griffiths says. The burden of carrying their family's secret has already weighed them down from most people. "They are about their parents and don't want to incriminate them," she says. As a result, children often give reluctant answers, denying their parents' criminal involvement. "But how could they not know?" Griffiths asks. "The secret of the girls is overwhelming when you



Griffiths says most of the children think it's their fault that their parents were arrested.

walk into the house." As she takes the two girls to clear their lockers in case they don't return to this school, Griffiths answers their questions. Was their mother handcuffed? Will she have to sleep in a jail cell? Then she drives them to a foster home.

Grow-up kids don't go directly to relatives because of safety concerns and the chance other members of the family are involved in the operation, says McNamara.

"SOMETIMES there's no food available, their clothes are dirty, and they are living in unsanitary conditions"

To gain custody, relatives must undergo drug tests and police checks, and allow Children's Aid to assess their home, a process that could be finished in less than a week.

Cynthia is one of many foster mothers in Markham who look after children at this stage. She asks that her last name not be used because of a confidentiality agreement signed with the CAS. Kids have arrived at her home as late as 2 a.m. after watching their parents being arrested. "They come in their pyjamas with nothing, and you have to pick them up from that point and make them feel human," she says. Afraid of incriminating their parents, children generally open up only to other foster children in

the house. "They are very reserved," says Cynthia, who has taken care of kids as young as 5. "You have to spoon-feed them to make them feel comfortable and safe."

Cynthia, a black Canadian, says her foster kids, all Asian, often face unwanted questions when others see her picking them up from school. "I tell them, 'You don't have to say anything, just tell them I'm the babysitter,'" she says. More Asian families need to become foster parents, she says. As of now, only three out of 130 foster families in the York Region system are Asian. "That would make it much easier for the children to blend in," she says. "They would also be in their own culture and eating their own food."

Although many grow-up kids live in unhealthy conditions, Cynthia has also taken in children whose parents send them to private schools and buy them the latest Nike shoes, Gap clothes, and Playstations. Some children aren't pleased when she takes them to Wal-Mart or Zellers to buy clothes for their stay. Cynthia wonders about the lessons a child learns growing up in an illegal environment that gives them everything they want. She asks if they wonder, "If mom is doing it, is it okay?" But overall, Cynthia says, "they are well-behaved and ambitious kids." Even though marijuana use is becoming socially accepted, she adds, that doesn't justify the situation these kids are in. "It's different growing marijuana in an open field," she says, "and growing it in a house with furniture, pencils—and children." ■

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DOGGY DANCING

Handlers and their pets are wagging their bottoms to tunes like *All That Jazz*

SOME FANS compare it to a pain routine in figure skating. Others say it's like watching a horse and rider do advanced dressage. However it's described, dancing with dogs is becoming a global phenomenon, with clubs and competitions emerging like springer spaniels in Canada, the U.S., Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand. In England, the sport is called "hoofwork to music" and showcased at the famed Crufts dog show in Birmingham (and aired on the BBC). In the U.S., where handlers and their pets wag their bottoms to tunes like *All That Jazz* and *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*, dancers send their videotaped performances to recognized associations for judging. Even the Dutch are now shaking a leg: In Holland next week, the first international gathering of dog-dancing fanatics is called, wait for it, *Dogs in Clubs*.

Although its explosion in popularity has been recent, some say dog dancing was first in B.C. by Abbotsford master Val Calpa. Her group, Maifest Canine Sports International, gave the first North American demonstration with a dressage rider named Tessa Martin and her golden retriever dancing at the Pacific Canine Showcase in Vancouver in 1991. But in England, Dave Ray, a dog show connoisseur and husband of Crufts star Mary Ray, credits his wife and her collies with inventing the craze. Sure, many handlers in many countries have trained such music over the years, he says, but the first "authenticated" performance might be Mary's in the Bedford area of England in 1996. Period.

In Brooklyn, N.Y., meanwhile, Julie Ventre, founder of the World Canine Freestyle Organization, says whoever started it, she now has more than 1,000 dues-paying members and estimates that some 8,000 people in the U.S. and nearly 14,000 around the world do some form of dog dancing. Nancy Givens, 50, says the former advertising executive. "It's a great stress reliever."

Dog dancing can be as simple as sitting



Mary Ray performs with her collies at the 2002 Crufts show in Birmingham, England.

back obedient moves (down, at, stay, come) to music. But it can also get as intricate as complicated Affenpops (mostly agree that London trainer Anita Szakalski and her border collie, Zig, are the ace plus almost Szakalski's performance in *Boxer Kington* shuffling along to *Honey for Hollywood* has

HER HUSKY
Newfoundland, Gus, was light on his feet but he didn't "bounce. That's a border collie thing."

fly leaping, spinning, jumping and hurtling in a performance that would put an acrobat to shame—all on invisible cues.

The dog Ventrone competes with a sheltie border collie (named Quicksilver Ready to Dance), but in dog dancing any handler and any dog can have their day. In Wellington, Conn., academic Laurel Rubalcava dances with a black and white Newfoundland named Ballo. (Doraine Sefton is one of her train-

"He's husky and needs a heavy beat," she says.) Gus, her five "light-footed" Newfoundland, now retired at 12, danced to Bachman/Turner Overdrive's *Take a Chance on Me*. But even Gus "didn't stand on his hind legs and bounce," she says. "That's a border collie thing." Still, her big dogs were easy to train. "They are so good at picking up cues that even a smile on my face would cue them." And what about the music? Do they really hear it? "Well, I don't want to get too anthropomorphic," Rubalcava says, "but they do associate music with fun. It's just like the jingle of car keys means a car ride."

On Salt Spring Island, B.C., Sheri Stauden says her Nova Scotia duck-tolling retriever, Magik, can hear the music, obviously. Her signature tune—the Lovin' Spoonful's *Do You Believe in Magic*—always makes her pet light up. Stauden says (Stauden, too, by the sounds of it.) Magik has entertained at retirement homes and even at a book launch in Calgary but she doesn't compete professionally. "It's not about the quad jump for us," Stauden says. "It's just fun to show what the dog can do."

And, at any level, dog dancing is bound to deliver one tail-wagger of an extreme: a well-timed, well-synchronized



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Competition for oil will be hot for many years, and the new PVTW will offer oil-rich countries \$1.25 billion, available only if new Iraqi oil exports can increase. However, according to the World Bank, Iraq's oil exports are expected to fall by 10% in 1991. The PVTW will also provide Iraq with \$1.25 billion to help it develop its oil fields. The PVTW will also provide Iraq with \$1.25 billion to help it develop its oil fields. The PVTW will also provide Iraq with \$1.25 billion to help it develop its oil fields.

BACKTALK



Newman (second from the right) monkeys around with other New Forest visitors.

Music | Slightly more massive than your average supergroup

Two of Canada's biggest bands—in size and buzz—bumped into each other one

The new DVD, *Two Can Play That Game*, is another collection of excellent, sophisticated pop, showcasing the depth of the band's talent past, which includes Dan Reynolds (who also works under the name Dead & Company) and touring singer Mike Cassano. "We've never can't figure out why they're called a supergroup," says "Super" Supergroup, where you take real rainmakers from massive bands and stack them together and then the supergroup ends so stupidly like mass murder." We took five unpopular things and stuck them together. Into this, we poured love, and we got the

where did this come from? We both
went Junior early on—little parallel's."

The new CD, *Teen Census*, is another collection of exuberant, sophisticated pop, showcasing the depth of this band's talent pool, which includes **Dan Aykroyd** (who also records under the name **Disstress**) and living queen **Heike Casse**. Yet Aykroyd can't figure out why they're called a supergroup. "I don't supergroups where you take members from massive bands and stick them together and then the supergroup ends up slightly less massive!" We took five unpopular things and stuck them together into

The New Pornographers' album, *Twins*, will be released on Aug. 21. You can hear a track at www.mechanic.ca/twinsnew.

Film | A case of flight fright

Glenn Murphy's chilling blue eyes are guaranteed to be in your nightmares soon. The 29-year-old Irishman was a score of shades as the sinister psychiatrist in *Jacob's Ladder* earlier this summer. Now, in the *West* Crime thriller *Red-Eye*, Murphy portrays his villain as the creepiest influence the big screen since *Anthony Hopkins* in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

As Jackson Rippner (yes, it's spelled) Murphy terrorizes hotel manager Lisa Randall (Rachel McAdams) aboard a flight to Miami—threatening to have her father killed unless she helps set up the murder of a high-pro-



the politician staying at her hotel, Murphy turns on his death stare like a Hollywood veteran and McDermott, Canada's girl of the moment, shows she's more than just Sappy (The Notebook) and Fanny (Misbehaving Children). In fact, she proves she's ready for all of the butt-fucking film offers that will almost surely land in her agent's inbox after *Rocky*'s imminent arrival.

Graven witnesses in some well-placed and unexpected humor amid the suspense—which is buoyed by the camera focusing tightly on the stars' faces (even Murphy's pangs are scary). As no-plot does the action drug. So even when you want to, you can't look away. **D** **JOHN MAYER**



A NEW IRISH MIGRATION

Thanks to its economic miracle, the world is now coming to Ireland

MR. RILEY WELLS is four years old this summer. His brother, Mr. Miles Wells, is two. ("What do you want to be when you grow up, Miles?" "Thru.") They live in Ardara, County Wicklow, about an hour's drive south of Dublin, in Ireland.

The high points of the summer so far for Riley and Liam were when simultaneous wins from two-state traveling delegations. Then Daddy's legendary Irish news program went on to win a field seminar Ardara for two nights. Uncle Paul and Christina from Ottawa pushed their tent in the guest room of the Wells residence for a little while longer.

Then Daddy's news came with rigors, praising Baines, and three elephants. After the show one of the elephants wandered through the parking lot, much regrettably on a wooden deck, and a crowd handler twisted the heart down and spilled it back to its master. Paul and Christina came with a plastic dinosaur dressed in a toy iceberg. Scale differences notwithstanding, this too was a hit. Riley and Liam's father, my brother Mark, wrote these days for a pharmaceutical company. He didn't move to Ireland because our family comes from there (although his wife Kathleen is Irish) but on good standing of the great Irish diaspora, Newfoundland and beyond. This wasn't a return to cultural roots. It was simple economic migration: Mark needed good work for good pay in a good place to live.

Which makes him part of a revolution. Practically everyone has heard of Ireland's economic miracle, which transformed the country from perennial loser to Celtic Tiger. From 1991 to 2001, its economy grew at a staggering annual pace of 4 percent, three times that of the rest of the European Union.

Who's lost oblivious is that success has reversed a century flow of human traffic. For 190 years after the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, Ireland was a place you left if you possibly could. In 1961, Ireland's population reached its lowest point in modern history, 2.8 million people, less than half its pre-famine tally of 5.5 million in 1841.

In Canada, we like to blow smoke about how a nation's greatest resource is its people. You don't really notice how true that is until your resources are leaving on every boat. For generations, as the former Irish prime minister or Garret FitzGerald put it during a recent speech in New Brunswick, "more than half of each age cohort was alive in Ireland at age 35. In the early part of the period, they died of TB or some other mortality. And the rest emigrated."

Irish emigration fueled Quebec politics (Charles Ryan, Brian Mulroney, Jean Charest), U.S. presidential races (Kennedy, Reagan, Clinton, Kerry), Argentine literature (Juan José Saer), and the Irish food fortune tellers except Ireland. We missed Kilkenny Castle, which becomes a little less grand when you learn its story: its owners had to auction off all the furniture in 1933 and finally sold the old Irish to the Irish state for \$36.12 years later.

By 1935, the wreck of Ireland was complete. So as FitzGerald told his New Brunswick audience, Ireland's leaders asked themselves, "Suppose we do the opposite to everything we're doing to see if we can see how that works?" Under the guidance of a humble businessman, T. K. Whitaker—certainly one of the great Irishmen of the late century—Ireland replaced protectionism with a wide-open economy. Ireland joined the European Community, cut business taxes sharply, invested heavily and for decades in public education. It took decades for these changes to pay off, but eventually the Irish discovered good luck makes good luck. Irish citizens suggested flooding part of the country in the 1960s, and started coming home in the 1970s. By the 1990s, there weren't enough Irish to do all the work. The world started coming to Ireland.

Ireland's population is only four million, yet by one estimate, Irish 1995-2000 generation of a million people immigrated to Ireland, only half of them returning Irish. Since then the pace has only increased. In May 2004, 10 new countries joined the European Union. Only Sweden, Britain and Ireland allowed residents of those countries to move in and work right away. In barely more than a year, 85,000 Eastern Europeans have arrived to work. The women who checked us up on our Dublin hotel was Czech. There's a Polish pub in Limerick, where the local newspaper news weekly columns in Polish and Chinese.

Don McLaughlin, chief economist of the Bank of Ireland Group, has predicted that this immigration will fuel a new "Celtic Tiger II" boom, as an economy constrained only by the amount of currency, every new arrival contributes directly to the nation's bottom line. Ireland was always a good place to visit, but as the Welles of Ardara have learned, now you want to live there. After giving us a wish to the world for so long, Ireland is finally ready to take some of the world back.

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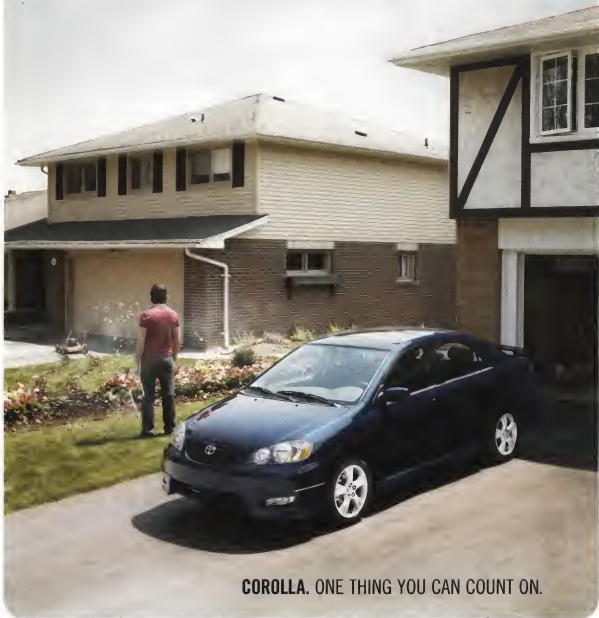
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